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EPISODES

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IN

THE WAR-LIFE OF A SOLDIER:

WITH THE

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DREAM-TESTIMONY OF ORA MAY,

AND OTHER

SKETCHES IN PROSE AND VERSE.

9X-0-8

BY

CALDER CAMPBELL,

AUTHOR OF "THE THREE TRIALS OF LOIDE," ETC.

"Con todo eso dijo el Don Juan sera bien leer la, pues no hay libro tan malo que no tenga alquna cosa buena."—CERVANTES.

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TO

ALETHEA RODDAM YOUNG,

THE TRUE AND TENDER FRIEND

OF

HIS YOUTH, HIS MANHOOD, AND HIS AGE,

THIS VOLUME

IS INSCRIBED

BY HER BROTHER,

THE AUTHOR.

East India Rooms,
Trafalgar Square, London, December 15, 1856.

The Author, in including some reprints, has to offer acknowledgments for permission to the Editors of "The United Service Magazine," "Tait's Magazine," "Chambers' Edinburgh Journal," &c.

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MY FIRST SNAKE.

I HAVE had some experience in snake-life, and have, here and there, related anecdotes about them which had no adornment from the colourings of fancy; but I have never yet described my first reptilian adventure —perhaps because of its association with some minor details that were not highly creditable to me as a young soldier. Nevertheless, wise men will tell you that he who may chance to run away from a toad, shall yet fearlessly face a foe. It has never been my fortune to "chat with mummies in a pyramid, or breakfast on basilisk's eggs;" but I have, notwithstanding, had my share of strange hazards, and may reckon amongst them that which first brought me *vis-à-vis* with a Cobra di Capello,—not in the Zoological gardens of any country,—not in any menagerie, fetid, foul, and unwholesome,—not in the hands and cowed by the prowess of the juggler,—but in its native woods and natural strength of venom. I mean to make a clean breast of it, by truthfully relating those somewhat objectionable antecedents to which I alluded: the boy-ensign of 1818 is now an old veteran, whose dormant blushes are not to be aroused by reminiscenses of short-comings that belonged to ignorance.

I had been just one year in India; and thus eman-

cipated from the swaddling bands and goose-step of Griffinhood, I felt that it was high time for me to mount the steed in pursuit of the wild hog, charge an elephant into a sugar-cane plantation after a tiger, or at any rate, flesh my virgin spear at an antelope hunt. There was no more warlike manner of showing my prowess; for, just at that period, the Pindaree war was breathing its last; and the regiment to which I was attached was snugly stationed near Madras, where the dull monotony of drills, parades, and guard-mountings, was unbroken, save by an occasional spree at Black Town, a ride to St Thomas Mount to an Artillery ball, or a drive to St. Thomé to flirt with any pretty Portuguese girl who had beauty sufficient to attract attention, or good-nature enough to encourage it. Oh! those dreary days at hot, sickly, ugly Vepery! Oh! those still wearier nights at Fort St. George, where duty compelled the unfortunate custodian of the Wallajah-gate guard to count the tardy hours in "full fig,"—that is to say, in complete military dress, coat buttoned up to the chin, stock high and stiff enough to cause spurious bronchitis, belt and sash, and gorget, and sword also! The heat of those guard-rooms, bomb-proofed and airless, was terrific; and the mosquitos that swarmed, even by daylight, were really appalling to all uninitiated and sweet-blooded new comers. I am convinced that they have repeatedly bit me, not only through my boots, but through my breastplate!

At last, joyful day! we received orders to march to Bangalore, 200 miles up country; and we had reached the Ghauts, above whose magnificent ridges

we were welcomed by a cooler and more salubrious climate, ere I had any opportunity of trying my second-hand Manton, purchased at a public out-cry or auction, before I left the Presidency. A day of halt came, and after an early breakfast I set forth for a good day's sport, accompanied by Halse, an elderly subaltern of celebrated experience, not only as a shot, but as a jolly comrade. The jungle near our encampment at the village of Cooloor, was said to abound in game; but we did not find the ground answer our expectations. I cannot say much for my own success; it so happened that I could never manage to kill, or even wound—what I aimed at. The hares (and there were many—indeed, they were almost the only game we saw for some time) had a knack of getting off scot-free that puzzled me; somehow a branch of a tree, or the shadow of one, kept constantly interfering between me and my object, and then the unaccountable risibility of my companion when he happened to witness my discomfiture, made me nervous; and I was safe to hit some innocent bush, or (as he said) discharge my piece at the sky, to my great confusion. Presently we fell in with partridges, green pigeons, and no end of quails, and due havoc did Halse make amongst them, whilst all my shot seemed to melt innocently in the air. At length I saw through the trees a stately bird as large as a turkey. I had heard the bustard described in glowing terms, and made sure that this was one. It seemed so tame and fearless that I felt certain I could knock it down; so, saying nothing of my discovery to Halse, I sneaked off towards the creature—got within a short distance

unperceived—and fired! Now indeed I rushed madly towards my prey, for there it lay quite dead; but, alas! Halse approached in double-quick time; and when he saw the bird, his laughter was so loud and long, that I was speechless. It was no bustard after all—only one of those hideous vultures, with raw-flesh-looking necks, red eyes, and exhaling a pestilential odour, that are the foulest carrion under Heaven!

I seemed to lose heart at this mishap, and somewhat sullenly telling my comrade that there was no luck in shooting double,—by which I meant in company with another, I said I should rest awhile under the jujube-tree, loaded with fresh ripe fruit, that canopied the vulture, and then follow him. No sooner had he disappeared, after pointing to the sun, and the direction he intended to take, than I set off on another tiny track which soon led—or misled me—into the very heart of the jungle, here so thick and branchy that I got fairly perplexed, and spent at least an hour in forcing a passage through it, without beholding any signs of game. I am afraid I grew a little uneasy, for though I remembered being told that the jungle did not extend very far to the westward—the direction I ought to pursue—I was apprehensive of being confused by the thickness of the trees, the quantity of entangling underwood, and the complete disappearance of any sort of path. I tried back—in vain: I could scarcely see the sun, hot as it was as mid-day drew near, for the brush; and another hour had nearly passed ere I found myself, to my great glee, amongst scattered jungle of a small

size, while in front I fancied I saw symptoms of cultivation, which I resolved to reach. I was fairly tired out ere I attained the spot I ambitioned; it was a large field of the Gunny plant—the Crotalaria juncea—from which a coarse but very strong sackcloth is made; and I knew it by the large yellow papilionaceous flowers, many of them just turning into oblong legumes, densely covered with a tawny down. I may as well confess that I have ever been more of a botanist than a sportsman; and though I might mistake a carrion-bird for a bustard, I would have imperilled no man's life by offering him the poisonous fruitage of the strychnos for a hill-orange!

I did not suppose that I could be now very far from the track which Halse would take, and as I exactly fronted the west, I determined to rest myself where I was. Near the end of the field, where a few bushes of the castor-oil plant terminated the agricultural features of the spot, arose a shady banyan tree; and making towards it I discovered that at its foot ran a little brook, whose pure waters—hot with the kisses of the sun—though they did not do much to cool me, still refreshed my hands and face. Back from the rill, and under the delightful awning formed by the beautiful green boughs of the banyan, studded with bright coraline berries, the favourite food of the parroquet, was a sloping mound of earth, free from the long grass which so frequently conceals noxious insects, but not wanting in a dry coat of short clear verdure. I threw myself down upon it, heedless of its having once been one of those hillocks which, fabricated by the white ant, or termites, are aban-

doned by them after a certain period, sometimes to give shelter to occupants still less desirable as neighbours.

The day was at its hottest, but beneath that arch of greenwood the sun pierced not oppressively, and I lay quietly on the sod, snuffing in the voluptuous fragrance of the wild jasmines that was wafted towards me from innumerable bushes near me, round which this graceful parasite of East Indian woods twisted with profuse starry blossoms. I suppose I soon began to slumber; perfect repose it was not, for sleep consists in something more than the mere absence of perception; and through all that drowsy fit I was conscious of being, as it were, *misplaced* and unwisely bedded—a fact that had certainly not struck me when I was fully awake. How long I thus lay is doubtful, but to this day I persist in believing that a sense of danger was first excited within me by an uncommon and disagreeable odour, which, overwhelming that sweet scent of the jasmine under whose influence I had drowsed off, stirred up the dormant life-principle within me to partial vigilance. Then came, suddenly, accompanied more strongly by that musky smell, a sensation of horror, paralysing every limb and sinew: a something cold and clammy passed over my head and face, until eyelids and mouth were sealed up; and, fully awake now, I yet thought, or wished to think, all was a dream, nor struggled to move. Thank God that the attempt was not made! Presently the hideous mystery passed slowly down my body; and then, as entangling between my legs, it went from me, I felt, without ascertaining by touch

or sight, that I was neighboured by what I most dreaded or abhorred on earth—some terrible reptile! Still I remained without power to move, even to unclose an eyelid; when at that moment I heard a voice—almost a whisper; it was Halse. "Hush!" he said, "stir not for your life until I bid you! Fear not, but lie perfectly still, regardless of all sounds or motion."

The perspiration of a deadly fear burst out at every pore, and I began to shiver; but there were prayers in my thoughts, and I tried to obey him. I knew that my lower extremities were no longer in contact with any substance, but I heard the unmistakable hissings of a serpent, and a rustling among the dry leaves near me. I lay upon my left side; and now, for the first time, I opened my eyes. Facing me, not a foot distant, its inflated head erect, sitting, as it were, enthroned amidst its sparkling coils, glaring at me with fiery eyes, I beheld an enormous hooded snake; and a faintness, so cold, so sickening, seized upon me that I thought I was going to die. Just then the sweet and subdued sounds of music fell upon my ears, the melody rising by degrees, and then again sinking into cadences, from which up it soared once more with melancholy harmony. I recognised the simple reed-pipe which is played by the native jugglers at their exhibitions, but I dared not lift my head to look. The snake lowered its scaly crest; then, inclining away from me by degrees, as the music proceeded, turned fairly round; its tail once more twisting about my feet as it retreated. Again it raised its terrible head, no longer fronting

me, but seeming intently listening to the symphony; no longer hissing, but uttering a strange noise, like the suppressed cluck of a hen; and thus, sweeping with slow, yet stately, zig-zag motion, it glode onwards to the spot whence the music issued.

"Up, now, dear Rob!" cried George Halse, and attempting to rise, I feel back in his arms. I must tell the truth—I fainted!

When I came to myself, I found that in addition to Halse, I had three other attendants; nor could I at first collect my senses sufficiently to understand my position. A loud hiss, then a series of sibillations from three or four covered baskets of plaited grass, explained the mystery. They belonged, those snake repositories, to two celebrated snake-charmers; and to them, under Providence, I owed my life. Halse told me that, getting anxious about me, and tired of his load of game, he was leaving the jungle, when he met a native, who willingly undertook to carry his gamebag. Asking him if he had seen a white gentleman, the man replied in the negative; he had only seen two persons, snake-catchers, who had come from Madras to collect serpents, and he had left them not far off, near some fields of Gunny. "Anxious to watch their proceedings," continued Halse, "I requested the fellow to lead me to them, and we soon came up to where they were still reposing. They told me they were going to the other end of the field, to an abandoned anthill, which they knew to be the abode of a large cobra di capello, and offered to exhibit their proceedings if I promised them a *bukshish!* Of course the douceur was pro-

mised, and off we set. Picture my alarm and surprise at reaching this place to behold you almost enveloped in the folds of the terrific reptile; nor were my companions free from apprehensions for your safety. You had lain down close to the mouth of the creature's den; what its intentions would be, we dared not think; but a single movement on your part must have undoubtedly roused its vengeance. The jugglers behaved admirably. I wanted to fire at it; but they dissuaded me, and assured me that they had hopes of not only wiling the snake by the sounds of their pipe from your side, but of eventually capturing it. They were right: the creature is in one of those cages; though not from it, but from some of its race, rendered less dangerous by the extraction of their fangs, proceeds that charming chorus of hisses. It was a beautiful sight to see the venemous thing moved by the influence of the music; unwind the voluminous coils that ringed it, and, leaving its hazardous perusal of your face, turn from you to seek its destruction! As it neared them, the charmers, sprinkling some strong-scented powder on a heap of withered leaves to which they set fire, continued to play, concealed behind the bushes; but presently the snake, as if doubly fascinated by the incense and the music, relaxed its movements, and in a moment after, lowering its crest, sank intoxicated on the ground. In another instant, lifeless to all appearance, it was seized and basketed; and there, again returned to consciousness, it awaits the moment when, no doubt, its crafty captors will deprive it of its hidden armoury of venemous fangs. How they achieve this process they refuse to tell,

but we owe them more than cold thanks, and I have told them to visit the camp this evening."

I need not say that ample was the gift the worthy jugglers received from us; nor can it be necessary to add that as I retired to bed that night, fervent were my prayers of thankfulness to Him who, at the hour of extremest peril, had sent me rescue. But ever since then, I have more than is customary with even the most timid female, continued to experience a cowardly fear of reptiles. I am convinced that the proximity of a serpent although concealed, and it may be innocuous, is revealed to me by a peculiarly delicate sense of smell. The unpleasant musky odour of a snake has frequently awakened me at night, when, carefully enclosed from danger within the firmly attached foldings of my mosquito curtains in my tent on a march, I have felt and trembled at the presence of a creature, to whose neighbourhood I would have preferred the midnight bandit or the lurking leopard.

WHAT I SAW ONE MORNING IN INDIA.

In the year 1836 I commanded a little detachment of native infantry at Condapilly in the Northern Circars; the object of this military occupation of a lonely and decayed town being the protection of the adjacent country from bands of petty marauders, who, in the absence of richer booty, made spoil of the cattle and crops of the ryots or agricultural population. There are no dense forests or thick

woods in the immediate vicinity of Condapilly; but beyond the hill-fort, which at the distance of perhaps half a mile, commands the town, and the ascent to which is steep and difficult, extends for several miles a stretch of jungle, where the *looties*, or thieves—for they deserve not the high-sounding title of banditti—found frequent shelter, in common with a few cheetas and a great many snakes. Here, too, game was abundant, providing them with the flesh of the spotted deer, the hare, the shy porcupine, and the peafowl, which is said to haunt such places as are tenanted by tigers, from which it may safely be inferred that water is not wanting, since neither panther nor tiger make their lair far from that necessary element. Here also grew profusely the trees of the *Cratæva marmelos*, whose apples—covered with a hard rind, through which, when ripe, oozes a slimy liquid—are used for food; the *Diospyros ebenum*, whose medlar-like fruit, after having been buried for months in the earth, forms a mellow and wholesome sustenance; and the *Ximenia Americana*, whose acid drupes cover a nutty kernel, very grateful to the wanderer of the woods who cannot gather for his dessert the rich-flavoured mango, or pink and succulent guava.

From having once been a town of considerable importance, Condapilly has dwindled to a very inferior rank amongst the cities of the Circars; and the hill-fort, at one period of considerable strength, now presents nothing but a meagre skeleton of its past celebrity. Towering high above the little esplanade on which the humble range of barracks

which sheltered the detachment was raised, the mountain was accessible at only one point, where a winding track—the remains of a flight of stone-steps now in complete dilapidation—formed a steep ladder, up which I have often toiled at early dawn, eager to watch the rising sun from the topmost pinnacle—a sight that amply repaid me for the extra fatigue of half an hour's climbing. There, crumbling piecemeal beneath the foot of Time, mouldered an ancient building of Moorish architecture, still suggesting by its extensive ruins and palatial structure recollections of the Mohammedan prowess which, so far back as 1471, had wrested the province of Condapilly from the hands of the Hindoos.

A long but sleepless night in sultry March had fevered my blood, as one morning, ere yet a single individual was stirring about our quarters, I strolled towards the mountain-gorge, and had stumbled almost to the top of the steep acclivity before the faint flush of dawn had roused the sentinel, whose call awoke the solitary pair of musicians of our party, a drummer and fifer, to sound the réveillèe. In ten minutes more I stood panting on the summit of the rock, gazing thirstily on the scene beneath me, where Asiatic beauty winded slowly before me, like a glorious river, whose changeable waters the eye tired not of drinking. I had no fear of thief or thug, for a late excursion in the district behind me had assured me of safety; but nevertheless I started violently when, from the branches of a stately peepul tree that grew close by, a dark figure, that seemed of human proportions, leaped with a jibbering cry upon the ground.

I had no great reason to be alarmed, for I saw not a man, but a monkey—one of those long-legged, brown monkeys with white-streaked faces that abound amongst these heights, and which, probably little less startled than myself, receded as I advanced, jabbering its dissatisfaction at my intrusion. At the foot of the peepul tree, throwing up its rich white petals, that shed around a sweet but sickening odour, grew a magnificent plant of the datura: and as I stooped to pluck it, a rustle in the underwood beyond, followed by an acute, sharp scream, which I ascribed to my friend the monkey, arrested my hand. I had judged correctly; but I had underrated the number of my early companions. With a spring that brought it almost to my feet, making me in my turn retreat, the monkey lay moaning, and, as I thought, violently convulsed among the grass; nor did I at the moment perceive, what indeed I discovered with a degree of horror, that round its body was twisted a gorgeously-spotted snake—the cobra di capello! I wish I could describe the maddened contortions of the monkey, as, writhing beneath the straining coils of the reptile, it rolled on the grass in vain efforts to rid itself of its deadly assailant. The piteous gaze of its eyes, as they wistfully looked up into my face, was eloquent with a summons for help which I was by no means inclined to resist. Whether the snake had bitten it or not, I could not guess, for it seemed to me as if it were merely playing with the animal—that fatal game which the cat plays with the mouse! But I shouted, and threw a stone, and then seizing a withered branch that lay on the ground, I advanced

to the charge. The monkey, which at another time would have fled at my approach, now remained perfectly motionless, as if it awaited certain succour. But the serpent, aroused to the cognisance of an assailant by a smart blow on the head, instantly inflating its horrid crest into that hoodlike form which renders it so appallingly hideous, gave vent to a loud hiss that seemed brimful of poison.

Again and again I struck at it: nor was it without a cold thrill through my veins that I beheld it disengage itself from the monkey; but far from attempting to make its escape, as I had conjectured it would do, it turned itself, half erect, towards me, and with a fluttering hobble—like the hop of a bird whose wings have been broken—it leaped, with forked tongue protruded, right in my very path! There was no time for thought. My stick was neither strong nor long. I could see the venomous eyes burn like fire, and the colours of its swelling neck glow more deeply, as it prepared to spring again; and I was fairly on the point of making my retreat by plunging, at all hazards, down the rock behind me, when a shrill, chirruping cry, somewhat like that of a guinea-pig, was heard, and suddenly an elegant little creature, which at the moment I was well-nigh ready to spiritualise into a good genius, sprung upon the serpent with a bound of lightsome ferocity which reminded me of the swoop of a kite upon a water-rat.

It was a mungoos! And now, indeed, a combat took plack which fixed me to the spot in mute admiration; but not for long. Once or twice it seemed

to me that the mungoos was bitten, but it might not have been so; for the velocity of their movements, as, clinging together, the snake and its foe rolled over and over amongst the long grass, prevented minute observation. It is asserted that, when bitten by a snake, the ichneumon retires for a moment to eat of some unknown plant, capable of rendering null the viperine venom; but on this occasion nothing of the sort occurred. The mungoos left not the conflict for a breathing-space; and at the end of about ten minutes the cobra di capello lay dead, torn and mangled piecemeal by the little animal, which frisked and danced about, with a purring sound, in a perfect frenzy of enjoyment.

As I held out my hand, actually believing, in the enthusiasm of the moment, that it would approach to receive my caresses, the mungoos, giving a bright, quick look at me, stamped its tiny hind-feet briskly on the relics of the serpent, as if in scorn of its victim, and disappeared amongst the brushwood.

I had forgotten the poor monkey. I found it stretched out, stiff and stark, among the datura flowers. The mungoos had come too late!

THE DREAM-TESTIMONY OF ORA MAY.

The moaning wind among the woods
  Told of the coming rain,
And, sobbing, left a shade that broods
  In darkness o'er the plain;
Athwart the sky clouds hurtled by,
  With the mist-wreaths in their train.

The streamlet, sent from distant hills,
Wailed like a whimpering child—
With hoot the timid heart that thrills,
The owl wheeled fast and wild—
It saw the form of coming storm
Where late such quiet smiled!

The Lark had left its skyey quire,
Red fogs the sun did veil;
Flashed from their depths sharp tongues of fire,
While thunder's voice did hail
The startled deer, that crouched with fear
Where forest flowers waxed pale.

* * * *

The Storm hath come!—the flood descends—
The warnings all were true:—
And thus a mystic feeling lends
Omens to creatures, too,
That show the darkness ere it ends
The brightness in our view!

I sat within my summer Bower,
All bright and sweet with flowers;
I sang the song that oft had power
To cheer me in dull hours,
When human cares kept *him* away
From that fair home of ours.

But still, though absent through long days,
The evening brought him back;
And now I watched the sunset rays
That kissed the woodland track,
O'er which on high, far in the sky,
Flitted the fleeting rack.

All things to me an aspect took
Of fanciful and fair;
Sweet flowers spoke faylike at my side—
Sylphs gambolled in the air—
I heard no tones save gentle ones,
Saw beauty everywhere!

I looked on the broad Agaric
Below the stalwart oak,
And thought each orange-purple streak
That on its surface broke,
Made it a table, richly decked,
To banquet Fairy-folk.

I looked upon the Aspen leaves
That quivered in the air,
And Fancy—which so often gives
A dazzling beauty where
It fixes—made them seem to me
Gay Dancers, dancing there!

A graceful Rose-bush flourished near—
Oh! a flush of blossoms bore it!—
And Hope, like them, came without fear,
Chasing each doubt before it:—
So the Shadows run before the Sun
When the Cloud is scudding o'er it!

I said—"The stormy stour hath passed,
And with it from my mind
The shadows strange, which thick and fast,
Like seabirds in the wind,
Around me came till all my frame
Nought but unrest could find.

"I'll sing the Song my Husband loves—
The sounds his ear may reach:"—
I tried to sing, but all in vain!
False Memory failed to teach
The words conn'd o'er so oft before—
I wanted tune and speech!

"A new song let me frame," I said.—
"Belovëd," (I began)
"Love alters not though life be dead:
I love thee though thy hands are red;
For steel loves blood as the grass loves dew—
Lo! it hath stained thee thro' and thro',
Where from the heart it ran!"
* * * *
I stopped—I shivered—what had put
Such words within lip-range?
I ne'er before had conned them o'er,
And now what direful change
Of sense had made a dirge so sad
Gush out, with madness strange?

A prophet-horror filled my soul
With anguish stern and strong:
Oh, what could urge that witch-like Dirge
From my lips, to bode of wrong?
As a Mother of Thrace o'er her newborn Babe,
Wept I over my New Song!
* * * *
The Twilight ended as I sat
Beneath the arbour eaves;
The Night-rack, whirling thro' the sky,
Bound up white clouds in sheaves;
The Wind swept by, like the rustle nigh
Of a Snake through withered leaves.

Men sometimes dream who do not sleep.—
I slept not!—Did I dream?—
I know not: but a drama deep
I saw, as in a stream
One looks and sees grim mysteries
Glower, through the wan moonbeam!

I saw a Wood, where wood was none—
A dell unknown before;
I saw a Traveller, all alone—
I *knew* the Cloak he wore;
I saw a deed of horror done
'Mid the tempest's angry roar!

I knew my Husband's rival there,
In my Husband's assassin!
But I could not speak, for I felt the air
Stifle me, mouth and chin—
And the Murderer fled, while I saw *him* dead
Who my heart and hand did win!

I heard a wail, but knew not whence
The solemn accents brake;
I heard the Dead turn in their Graves
By the noise their bones did make;
And I shrieked so loud that the Vision fled,
Leaving me there awake!

Awake,—but thro' the night-dewed Trees
Flashed torches red and bright;
And on came heavy steps, and knees
That tottered up the height
Which led to where, all quivering there,
I stared with puzzled sight.

A dismal Throng, that bore along
A rude and bowery Bier!
Upon it lay in moonshine gray
My Husband, brave and dear!
No word was said, yet I knew he was dead,
Though I could not shed a tear.

Blood-dabbled were his cloak and vest,
Blood-clottered was his side;
The crimson flood still from his vest,
Flowed forth in solemn pride;
But he was dead, and (as they said)
By Murder had he died!

Out then spake I, accusing loud
The man who did the deed
Which I had seen in woodland green,
Where the grass seemed yet to bleed:—
But the wondering Crowd, with voices loud,
Cared not to hear or heed.

Or, if they listened, one and all
Turned, pitying, away,
With whispers sad—"Alack she's mad!
Leave her to weep and pray!"
And I wept and prayed for JESU'S aid,
And it came after many a day!

I even learnt to pray for him
Whose hand had widowed me!—
And lo! as Morning from the dim
Of Night lights up the sea,
A ray from Heaven to me was given,
That brought serenity!

One day—not long ago—was borne
A Stranger to my gate,
Whose steed, by cruel treatment wrought
To fury desperate,
Had flung him down against a stone,
Half dead, in wounded state.

Though many years had passed, I knew
That Face, whence eyes glared out
That scanned me, too, with gaze which grew
Wilder, as thronged about
His weary bed, Men, who then said
His death was past all doubt.

Then in the pangs of fierce remorse
He made confession. He
It was who left that grisly Corse
Which I in woods did see:—
Awake, or in a dream, I saw
The thing that was to be!

Say not that such things cannot pass
Because thou hast not proved them:—
Shadows have streamed across yon glass
And God may have removed them
Lest, at the sight, men should take fright,
And doubt if e'er *He* loved them!

We cannot tell His purposes,
Nor why the cloud he scatters
That hides the ill none can conceal
From Him!—It little matters
How Justice with its sudden hand
Crime's iron network shatters!

LOOK FORWARD, AGE!

Thy youth hath long been passed,
The verdure and the flowerage faded long;
Life's sunny smiles amassed
In pleasant places, amidst dance and song,
Live but in memories, that make them look
Like dried leaves in a book.

Pain, more than Pleasure, dwells
Within such memories: therefore seek not thou
To dive within the cells
O'er which their sickly scent dead Lilies throw;
Nor ransack records, 'mid whose mildewed leaves
Its net the spider weaves!

Canst thou thy youth restore
By seeking at its dried-up fount the draught
Which may not, ever more,
Howe'er so great thy thirst, by thee be quaffed?
The waters, gone to waste, no longer run
All sparkling in the sun.

The gray hairs on thy brow—
Turn they to plenteous auburn as thy thoughts
Are with the Long-ago,
Careering on the mist that vaguely floats
Over the past—thro' which all things appear
More bright, because less clear?

And nimbler grow thy feet,
As thou in thought retracest paths once trod,
Undreaming that deceit
Followed thy footsteps o'er the soundless sod?—
Pause ere thou try'st Youth's dance with limbs that tell
How Time may vigour quell!

Then gaze not on the Past
As on a picture, whence true joys may rise,
Or thou wilt find at last
The bitterness of lying vanities;
And, like the reed that shakes to every wind,
Fall with thy fallen mind!

But to the COMING look—
Gaze to the eastward—to the early Sun!
See where the gushing Brook
Doth from its source in vigorous brightness run,
Read back no leaf, but turn the onward page,
And so look forward, Age!

SONNET.

"And now, what of the night, Watchman?" He said:
Then answer made the Watchman, with slow voice
That balanced well the cadence of "Rejoice,"
With "Stand upon your guard!"—"Be not afraid,
Nor yet too bold. Look up! the clouds, which shade
Those skies, have light beyond them—and a noise
Of Angel-wings that in the heavens poise,
Joyously hymning the good God who made

The Earth on which we stand to bear *His* Cross,
Who mounted it to save Mankind!—Look up!"—
The night is dark, but in mine eyes the Light
Of Higher regions shineth; and I toss
My glad arms in the gladsome air, nor stoop
To stare beneath my feet for planets bright!

SONNET.

Between ourselves and our intents too oft
We build a wall impassable. We mar
By futile artifice what honest skill
In ethics should alone effect. Straight on,
And up the mountains, heavenwards, aloft,
Should be the Chosen Path: however far
The goal may lie, to reach it wants but will
To trust in God, and prudent courage, drawn
From honourable purpose. Hard may be
The track, and steep to climb,—but walls are none
To scale, nor ladders lack we, 'midst the chill
Of mental Alps; but only eyes to see
These words of truth light-written in the sun—
"The Path of Duty aye runs up the Hill!"

WHAT I SAW ONE NIGHT IN INDIA.

The annual inspections and reviews being over, I had obtained a month's leave of absence from my regiment, at that time occupying the lonely fort of Chanda, the capital of a district of the same name subject to the Mahrattas, and some eighty-seven

miles distant from Nagpore, which was indeed the nearest station to us where the sight of a British face or the sound of a British voice could delight our eyes or ears. Chanda, situated amidst jungles, and overlooked by the remote Goand hills, continued but a short time to be garrisoned by the Honourable Company's troops; prevailing fever made it unhealthy, and frequent visitations from cholera of a singularly fatal character led to its evacuation. But in 1820, when we were sent there to protect the surrounding country from the aggressions of migratory bands of marauders—the remnants of the broken-up Pindaree and Goand armies—prosperous was that officer deemed who, by any circumstance apart from death or dishonour, was prevented from joining his corps within the seven miles of walls that enclosed the old straggling city and fort of Chanda. The produce of the district consists principally of rice, millet, pulse, and some sugar-cane; but the agricultural classes possess also large flocks of goats and sheep; and from the milk of cow and buffalo great quantities of *ghee*, or clarified butter, are prepared for the market. This ghee, which, in its best condition, and when fresh, is white and firm as curd, and perfectly inodorous, is far superior to the rancid butter and lard of European kitchens, and is carefully packed into huge *dubbers*, or kegs of hardened leather, and thus conveyed for sale to the towns and villages in the neighbourhood. Scarcely knowing whither to direct my course, in the total want of any objects of interest within a convenient distance, I resolved on making a shooting excursion towards Nagpore;

and if wearied of myself and my gun, I decided on remaining at that gay station for the full period of my leave. About twelve miles from Chanda there was a small village called Bassim; thither, then, I forwarded my tent and regimentals over-night, intending to ride out there the next morning with two comrades, who, like myself, were anxious to verify the reports that had reached us of the prolific nature of the adjacent jungle in the provision of game. We accordingly reached Bassim to breakfast, and found it very prettily imbedded in a series of woodland tracts rather than jungle; nor were our sporting expectations baffled, for we found so many birds—from the pea-fowl that supplied the *fond* of our soup at a late dinner, to delicate floriken and stately bustard—that when, on the following morning, they bade me "God speed," I made up my mind to remain where I was for another day or two.

The beauty of those woodland tracts, as, in the diminished glare of a July sun I wandered amongst them that afternoon, could not be surpassed in the whole range of sylvan scenery. On leaving my tent, pitched in a little grove of mangoes near the village, I told my domestics not to expect me before dusk; and having ascertained that no tigers lurked amongst the fastnesses of the *near* forest—in which, here and there, large patches of cultivated land, redeemed from the jungle, proclaimed the gradual progress of agriculture—I fearlessly plunged into a tract of *bush*, which, having neither the density of large trees nor the intricacy of close-creeping underwood, was in nowise sombre or menacing. It was, in fact, more

like the long-neglected park of a gentleman's residence in some woodland county; and frequent open glades of grass, whose verdant hues were becoming renovated from the first showers after the hot months, were beautifully, if irregularly, intersected by tiny brooks; rocks of small size, but of quaint shape, fantastically covered by parasite plants; and snug little dells, whence now an antelope, and next a hare, and again a scowling, cowardly hyena darted out. I carried a fowlingpiece, as in duty bound, but truly I made little use of it at any time, and on this occasion rather considered it an encumbrance, for I felt a greater inclination to scramble about in search of wild plants and their fruits and flowers, than to attack the peaceful inhabitants of the wild wood.

At length, fairly wearied, I flung myself down beneath a glorious tree of the wild fig, or *Ficus glomerata*, in the axilla of whose dependent branches grew clusters of crimson fruit. Alas! like the apples of the Dead Sea, they but feasted the eye; for though they turned not "to ashes on the lip," I found them pregnant with "insect life;" they were, in fact, nests swarming with little black-winged flies, to whom Acheta Domestica, in her charming "Episodes," could have assigned a category and a name. However, contenting myself with a few ripe jujubes that grew near me, I drew out my pocket-book, and, in the act of pressing into it a little unknown flower of exquisite beauty, fell fast asleep.

My awakening was not of the most agreeable nature, for I was roused by a painful blow of something on the bone of my leg. At the instant I neither

remembered where I was nor what had led to my situation there; but gaining a sitting position, beheld with a start of terror a harpy-faced creature stooping towards me, and fixing a pair of red menacing eyes upon me. Again it struck me with its beak, and then I uttered a loud cry, which had the good effect of infecting my assailant with my own fears; for it receded, and I saw what it was. A few paces backward had fluttered a huge bird; one of those ghastly, bald-headed vultures of Hindoostan which are found congregating wherever garbage and carrion spread out their fetid banquets on the face of the land. Peering at me, its fishy eyes imbedded in red sockets of what seemed raw flesh, its dingy-white wings extended and flapping, as if preparatory to attack, it gave a harsh scream, and, as I imagined, was about to pounce upon me. Whether such was its intention, who can say? However, I seized my Manton, which lay beside me, and levelling it at the gluttonous-looking creature, shot it through the head. It was at anyrate the only bird I had shot that day, and immense was the excitement my success seemed to create around me. A flock of noisy green parroquets, and chattering, dark-feathered minas from the tree above me, spoke discordant plaudits as they burst from its green recesses; while two squirrels darted frantically past me with sharp chirrupings, and from a neighbouring bush sneaked out a sly crouching creature, which I took for a civet cat. At all events I had now leisure to observe that a change had crept over the face of the heavens; the sun was at its setting: I must have slept more than an hour.

I had no watch, but the lengthened shadows and the purple and golden haze which clad the woodlands apprised me of a fact that was at least probable: I might chance to be benighted in those woods, which, if safe and pleasant for day-pastime, were not enviable for night repose. In some hurry and confusion I started up and away, and had walked a considerable distance straight forward ere I was aware that the sun, or rather its declining radiance, was still in my face, as it had been when I set out, and that consequently, if I wished to return to Bassim, I should now turn my back upon it. I did so, but got quickly puzzled; and soon remarked, from the increasing size of the timber, that I was getting more deeply into the forest. I could distinguish no path, though hitherto there had been perceivable several of those tiny, well-worn tracks that pierce through and intercross each other in most of the jungles near a town or *steading*, and which are so aptly named, in the dialect of the natives, *chowr-rusta*—that is, thief-tracks. Again I turned back, striving as much as possible to keep the sun behind me; but the sudden gloaming of Hindoostan fell upon me as I hurried on through brake and brier, and there was scarcely a gleam of daylight left to direct me, when all at once I saw in front of me a little tank, or lake, I knew not which, on the borders of which arose the dark walls of an edifice.

Hurrying up to it, my disappointment was at the full to find it to be the ruins of an old pagoda, evidently long neglected, and almost entirely covered in by long trailing lianas. A solitary idol crumbled

in front of it—the mouldering janitor to the dismantled temple! No floral offerings of moogra or chrysanthemum evinced recent devotional visitor; no benzoin, no scented gum, announced sacerdotal presence. As I stood, plunged in reflections that were not very exhilarating, a loud growl from the jungle was heard; and at some distance from where I watched their advent, two creatures—a she-bear and her cub—trotted toward the water. I was now fairly "in for it!" Should I wait their approach, or take flight in the darkness? My ammunition was not of a description to protect me from such assailants if attacked. Meanwhile they seemed perfectly unconscious of my proximity, and drank very peaceably of the water, playing a hundred clumsy antics, which the increasing obscurity made dimly visible to me. At length, however, they retreated as they had come; and as to my left the jungle appeared more thin and low, I began to look about for a path. None could I find; and at last I really deemed that the best thing I could do would be to remain where I was until the first dense darkness of night receded before the coming stars, and the moon, which I knew must ere long make its appearance.

The front of the pagoda facing the tank was a heap of ruins; but as I carefully reconnoitred it, I found that to the rear, where it looked upon the jungle, an archway and a few pillars remained in tolerable repair. Here, then, I seated myself on a fragment of stone, and waited with what patience I could muster for Cynthia and her train. As I sat there, all the various and strange sounds of night grew and grew,

until I could have guessed the season by my ear alone, even if I had been blind. There was no wind, but the whirring of myriad insect beings, aroused from day-sleep, caused a sort of under sound akin to air. Mosquitos from the woods and the water fastened on my face, and kept my handkerchief in constant play to drive them off. Night birds—the owl, that ever and anon hooted by, and then pounced down upon some shrewmouse, or rat; the rice bird, snapping its bill as it caught at the fetid green bugs which careered around; and presently, deep in the brush, the bark, short and sharp at first, of a jackal, speedily taken up by another, and then another, till a whole pack gave forth the fearful howl, prolonged as it proceeds, that so often startles the silent watcher of the night in India. Hisses, too, were in my ears; and more than once I fancied that a whole legion of snakes was approaching me; and then from the tank ascended a concert—the harsh and many-toned voices of a million frogs, those enormous bull-frogs whose discordant utterance makes itself heard for more than a mile in the silence of the night. Most welcome sound of all came at last the piercing tones of a Kulera horn and then the beat of tom-toms—for I knew they must proceed from Bassim. They were right behind me, so that, in fact, my path lay beyond the tank; but more light was absolutely necessary to search for it with any chance of success.

And light, too, I soon had in front of me; but a light so fairy-like, so fleeting, so spiritual, that I gazed on it with an admiration the same spectacle had never failed to excite. At the foot of a range of bushes I

first beheld what seemed to be a spark of fire, the glitter of a gem: presently there broke out another, which rose in the air, and thereupon a whole host of gleaming mote-sized cressets leaped up and down, and whirled over the tree-tops, and twisted in mazy dance through the boughs, and gemmed every leaf with all the most dazzling tints of red, and topaz, and amethyst. Oh those beautiful fire-flies! Yet almost as suddenly as they had come they vanished; or, by some mute confederacy, did they but put out their body-lamps, to reserve their lustre for some future occasion? Scarcely had they disappeared, ere a real star shot out into the heavens; a faint, but no longer dubious light, like the first errand of dawn, stole over the sky; and by and by I could see that the moon was about to show herself.

At that instant voices from the jungle struck upon my ear, so near at hand, that I was on the point of hailing the owners, when a presentiment—men use that word so vaguely!—a sense of caution came over me, and I remained silent, retiring behind the pillared archway just in time to conceal myself from the comers. They were two men, in the ordinary costume of respectable Mahratta travellers, wearing white garments and turbans, with swords stuck in their belts, and each his shield. But their hands were engaged in dragging what to me appeared to be a dead animal. Within a few yards of me, but round a corner of the pagoda, to view which I found it necessary to leave my recess, and lean across a dismantled fragment of the building, they halted; and then—for now the moon was actually up—I saw that

their burden was no animal, but a dead man. It was a large and heavy corpse, dressed in rich raiment, for I could plainly distinguish the brocaded trousers, the gold-hemmed robes, the silver-mounted creese in the burnished belt. And then one of them spoke in the common *rekhta*, or mixed dialect of Hindoostan—at which I rejoiced, for I understood neither Persian, nor Mahratta, nor Telogos, nor Tamul.

"Take off the *roomal* (handkerchief), Kahoo; it has done its duty once more: it is the seventh time, and must therefore be now discarded. Burn it we must, and place it before the idol of Kalee. This fat unwieldy hog's son must be disposed of. Now for his girdle and turban."

I saw them untwist a long noose-like piece of linen from the corpse's neck, on which the bald head fell loosely back. He had been strangled by Thugs, and the Thugs were close to me! They divested him of his girdle, which made a clinking noise as it struck the ground.

"Do not rip it open, Kahoo; said he not that he had a hundred ashrafies of gold, and four dozen of ear-rings and nose-rings, about his person? Look to his turban; they are safer where they are."

They undid the windings of the turban, from which I saw them take many jewels; which, with the girdle, they stowed away amongst their garments. I raised my Manton: a strange desire came over me to kill those wretches; but I remembered that what might kill a vulture, might but scratch a man. Had I slain those murderers of the murdered, would it still have been murder? Be sure that it is God's to punish!

And when, many years thereafter, I saw at Guntoor, in the Northern Division, no fewer than 160 convicted Thugs working in chains, I thought that it was very possible those two men were amongst them.

Presently one of the men withdrew into some nook of the ruins, the other dragged the body nearer to the tank, and I heard him tell his comrade to fetch the *kodali*, or pickaxe. I could now no longer see them, but I heard the stroke of the pickaxe, and knew that they were digging a grave; and by and by I also knew, by the sound of trampling, that they were pressing the earth compactly over their victim. A crackling noise succeeded, and from the bright reflection that shone all around, I guessed that they had lit a fire over the grave—their common practice.

A complete silence, that lasted for more than an hour, convinced me that they had either departed, or had fallen asleep; and I was on the point of stealing from my hiding-place, when loud voices in the distance beyond the tank reached me. I heard the shouting of men, and amongst the advancing voices there was one that was familiar and most welcome to me.

"Sahib azeez! Sahib, kehan hue toom?"—"Master, dear master! where art thou?" Yes, sure enough it was the voice of my faithful Sooliman! And then gliding cautiously from my retreat, I looked for the Thugs. They were not visible; but a large fire lay smouldering near the lake, and some burnt rags were strewed before the hideous idol. Were the Thugs sleeping in the Temple? I knew not, neither did I care; for now flashing across the

water I perceived the glare of many torches, and with a loud voice I hailed my servant. In a few moments thereafter he was at my side, kissing my hands, and thanking Allah and the Prophet that I was found.

It may be as well to say that although information was given to the head man of Bassim, as well as to the proper authorities in high places, as to what I had witnessed, no discovery of the murderers was made; nor were any traces of them found in the ruined temple. There was a buried body, and that was all.

SONNET.

Around us still extends a Paradise
In the true hearts that love us: Friendship sets
Young saplings all about, which turn to trees,
Abundant in the fruitage of rich thoughts
And generous emotions: round us rise
Prolific flowers, which vernal dew-fall wets
With gushing odour,—whence do stingless bees
Gather unsating honey:—round us floats
A breath of fearless health; and with us strays
A spirit of cheerful industry, which keeps
The mind from brooding on its selfish cares,
Intent on aiding others. Eden-ways
May still be traversed; and while Adam sleeps
Quietly near Eve, may we breathe Eden-airs!

A LEGEND OF THE HEBRIDES.

In the Northern Ocean is a desert island—
A little desert island; around it and across,
Up the sterile cliffs and crags that form its seaward high land,
Down again amidst the moors that fringe a dreary moss,
You'd walk it in an hour:—
Trees are none within it; living man upon it
Hath no habitation, and the seagull's cry
Floating on the surly wind—if that one could con it,
Hath a meaning menacing to scare the passer by:
Thanks be to God we have no power
To read such mystery!

Rocks all gray and naked, scarce a weed to clothe them,
Stumble down against the shore upon the Western side;
Stagnant marshes to the East, so foul that fiends might loathe them,
Scatter pestilential fumes to quell the budding pride
Of any green-leafed thing:—
Save the seafowl and the rocks and the lizards scaly,
Save the swamp-bred toad that gapes after summer gnats,
Save the newt and frog that 'mid the marshes paddle daily,
Till the winter's icy breath freeze up the slimy flats,
Save the bat on leathern wing,
And hideous water-rats——

Living on that Islet is no other creature!—
Of the Dead, within it are there human graves?
Hath the Tempest in its ire conquered feeble Nature,
And the hearselike Surges there conveyed to sea-beat Caves
The bodies of the Drowned?
Are there midnight Phantoms there, gliding in the starshine?
For the night-bound Fisherman hath witnessed, thro' the Dark,
Wreathy forms and shadowy Shapes, like vapours that afar shine,
And heard shrill cries, that sounded like no bird's that he could mark,—
Cries that had an eerie sound
Which made it woe to hark!

* * * *

In a lordly Castle, looking on the Ocean,
Over which, ten miles or more, a barren Island stands,
A stately Lady, pale and proud, looks with a pure emotion
Upon a gallant Youth, who kneels to kiss her lily hands:
"My gentle Mother dear,
I've won the warrior's knighthood, wear the warrior's laurel,
Back to thee have come again, loving none so well!
Mother dear, I'm now no boy; tell me of that quarrel,
Feud—or fatal accident—by which my Father fell:
I would fain the story hear,
Darling Mother, tell!"

"Not in strife or battle fell thy noble Father—
Not by any accident whose nature we could learn!
Mystery enshrouds his fate: from the past I gather
Not one fact to prove that I a Widow's weeds do earn
By his assured decease!
Yet twenty years a widow have I wept and wailed him,
Twenty years without a hope to see him living still;
Whether captive he complains, whether Death assailed him
In some grim mysterious shape, I know not! Human skill
Maketh not the darkness cease
Which conceals the Ill!

"Lovely on that morning shone the tranquil surges,
Lovingly that morning did he clasp my hand,
Saying—'Dearest Wife, I go where Duty sternly urges,
But ere Night bring out her stars beside thee will I stand:'—
And then he kissed thy brow—
Kissed thee and thy mother, Boy! they were the last caresses
The husband and the father gave; we saw him ne'er again!
And search was all at fault! Alas, a Mother's tendernesses
Were all that kept Life in my frame and Frenzy from my brain!—
Thou hast heard the story now:
Its memory will remain!"

Loudly then within their ears—loudly, shrilly ringing,
Came a weird unearthly laugh that caused them both to start;
And lo! close by the casement beside them, cat-like clinging,
They saw a hideous rugged Thing—to paint it I've no art;
But filthy, fierce, and mean,
Appeared an aged Woman there—for woman was it truly—
With no coif for the loathsome hair that, lank and grizzled, stirred
Like greedy worms, or ghastly snakes by hunger made unruly,
About her leprous neck—her hands were taloned like a bird;
Her eyes, as sharpened daggers keen,
Red circles did engird!

"Who art thou, strange Woman? whence and wherefore com'st thou?"
"To tell thee of thy absent Lord, and of his love for me!"
"It is some hapless Maniac! poor Wanderer, whither roam'st thou?
Rest thee here, and thou shalt find a shelter fit for thee."
Oh! louder laughed She then!
Shook her withered hand and hissed, spitefully regarded
Piteous Lady, wondering Knight:—"Pah! I hate ye both!

Wend with me, and let no doom of madness be awarded—
Ye shall find I've wit enow to prove how much I loathe
Falseness in the fairest men,
Breakers of an oath!"

* * * *

O'er the brine they're bounding—Lady and young Chieftain—
With staunch Clansmen in the boat, and the Beldam gray;
Now the barren Islet nears, and by it they are drifting,
And now upon its sterile shore they land—and what see they
But crags 'midst swampy ground?
Harshly laughed the Hag, and then "Follow me," she muttered,
And like a wild unearthly thing she darted from their sight;
Then o'er them on a Rock appeared, where her torn raiment fluttered
Like the ragged wings of some foul Bird that hovereth in the light,
Ere it drop beneath the wound
Won from the Arrow's flight!

"Here beneath my footsteps, in the mossy crevice
Of this Cliff that soars above yon fetid marsh below—
With no tombstone mockery, bearing lying device,—
With no coffin, with no shroud, lies my hated Foe—
Once how dear was he!

Oft he swore he loved me, ere he saw thee, Lady!
Oft he vowed no other e'er should be his Bride!
Bore me to a happy home, 'mid green forests shady,
Tended me and loved me so—for him I could have died—
Died, or lived, right willingly,
To give him joy or pride!

"But as falls the Autumn leaf 'neath the kiss of Winter—
But as creepeth yellow leaves on the frostbit Bough—
I beheld his love decay, and in his bosom enter
Other hopes and thoughts that filled my very heart with woe;
I watched him keenly, then!
Watched him, closely; yet he fled—fled, and left me lonely;
Fled—but ere a year was gone I found him: Lady, where?
Nestled in thy haughty arms, and calling thee the only
Sole Belovëd of his Heart—sole object of his care:—
The falsest he of living Men,
Thou Fairest of the Fair!

"I had one true Kinsman—one for him forsaken—
To his ears I breathed my wrongs, and asked his secret aid;
And to glut my just revenge such fatal means were taken
That all succeeded as I wished.—Thy Lord was here conveyed
All in the dead of Night:

Here, while kneeling at my feet, pleading that he loved thee,
My kinsman struck him on the brow, and I within his heart
Thrust a dagger—'twas his own: no pity ever moved me
To spare him then: I saw, nor sighed to see the lifeblood start;—
And yet it was a dreary sight
To mark hot life depart!

"In this rocky crevice, covered up with moss,
Lies his mouldering Body still—the poniard in his heart;
Dig and delve, and ye shall find—unblest by saving Cross—
Him for whose most faithless love my faithful soul doth part:—
My latest words are said!"—
And when the Chieftain and his men, in great doubt and wonder,
And with mickle toil had made their way up to the Peak,
There, stretchëd stiff and lifeless now upon the mosses, under
Whose matted shroud 'midst stony boults moulders the Corse they seek,
The aged Beldam lay, new dead,
A smile upon her cheek!

THE NEW YEAR.

The Night, and Darkness with it, like a Bride
That steals in lampless beauty to her bed—
The Night, and coldest Winter, which hath shed
A sheet of snowdrift on the Mountain's side—
The Night, and Sickness with it, that doth glide
With throbbing pulses and an aching head—
The Night and I, Darkness and Suffering spread
In chill folds all about me, crushing pride
Of life beneath their weight!—Now do I steal
To bar the Old Year out—a sorry guest!
Now, dull and sad, enter the Mist that floats
About the New Year—nursing in my breast
A shadowy Terror, such as all men feel
Who lonelily have battled with stern thoughts!

NARGISI.

I.

It was no very brilliant occasion that first induced me to draw my maiden sword in the cause of my country,—or, must I confess it, of my paymasters, the Honourable East India Company. The Pindaree war had terminated before I reached Madras in 1818; and though hordes of *looties*, or banditti—the offshoots and remnants of the broken-up enemy—still overran the Upper Provinces, rendering a distribution of the native troops, in numerous detachments, necessary to protect the agricultural and peaceably-disposed inhabitants, it was not often that

we were called upon to exercise any startling amount of bravery in a stand-up, hand-to-hand fight; for the freebooters rarely combined in any great numerical force, and as rarely retained any post from which a strong detachment indifferently well disciplined could not expel them without encountering much danger. But, for all that, an affair would occasionally start up when the system of attack and defence became something more than a mere matter of play, and we were invoked to ascertain that our cartouches contained metal somewhat more attractive in the eyes of a true soldier than parade gunpowder. I was not quite released from the swaddling bands of my griffinhood, when I was required to display my discretion in a transaction that was said to demand both resolution and judgment; and though its light turned out of a less brilliant lustre than was anticipated, the blame is not to be attached to me. I need scarcely explain that the term "griffinhood" is apportioned to the first twelve months passed by an individual, not a native, in the East Indies; who, until the expiry of that period, is dubbed a "griffin,"—in other words, a greenhorn—subject to be played upon by all who have wit or craft enough to impose upon him by any sportive sort of hoax. Now, I had passed my novitiate hitherto with tolerable credit, and it was no longer remembered that the year of ordeal had still some days to run, when my first Christmas dinner in the East was to be partaken of at the lonely station of Chanda, a fortified town of some extent in the province of Goandwana, subject to the Nagpore Mahrattas, and about eighty-seven miles distant from the city of Nagpore.

Information reached the officer commanding the regiment to which I was attached that a little hill-fort, called Ameerkote, about twenty miles off, had been suddenly entered by a body of errant Pindarees, under the command of a distinguished robber chieftain. The fort, garrisoned only by some thirty worn-out veterans of the Rajah's troops, since the place was considered too unimportant to attract the attention of even the humblest class of marauders, was seized by a *coup de main* in the night, when all who did not instantly submit were slaughtered; whilst the plunderers, amounting as was reported to about a hundred men, freely sacked the houses of the inhabitants, and were commencing a series of depredations on the surrounding hamlets, carrying off the cattle, and appropriating the crops of the poor Ryots. A wing of the —— regiment was immediately ordered to march upon Ameerkote, accompanied by fifty troopers belonging to the army of the Rajah of Nagpore, also stationed at Chanda; and, as if to provide a fresh stimulant to the general indignation, tidings were brought us, just as we were starting in light marching order, that the wife and only child of Yoosef Khan, one of our most respected native officers, had been arrested on their way from Nagpore to Chanda by the banditti, and conveyed prisoners to Ameerkote. I need not delay the current of my story thus early in its commencement by detailing the trivial incidents of our march, but proceed at once to the main fact in connection with my first episode in a prolonged war-life. We reached the little fort just in time to dash upon the fag end

of the retreating Pindarees, whose spies had been on the alert, acquainting them with our advance; by which precaution they escaped almost scatheless. It is true that we found rumour had marvellously exaggerated, not only their numbers, but the mischief they had perpetrated, for the inhabitants of Ameerkote—plundered it is true—had, by timely submission, escaped massacre. No attempt had been made to fortify the little enclosure, nor did it appear that the intention of the enemy was to retain it for more than a few days. The retreating party, consisting of about sixty men, were charged by us as they fled from the gates, and followed up by the troopers. About twenty fell, a few were taken prisoners, whilst of our detachment only three men were wounded. I had been ordered to take possession of the house of the Killadar, or governor of the fort, and had to force my way into it through a party of fleeing Pindarees; one of whom fell beneath the bayonet of a sepoy, who probably, by that act, saved my life: the poor wretch was stabbed through the heart; and we found him dead after we had obeyed instructions by searching the old ruinous house. From the superiority of his dress and accoutrements, we afterwards discovered that we had guessed rightly in considering him the chief of the gang.

In the inner chamber of the edifice I found the affrighted wife of Soobadar Yoosef Khan, with her son, a fine boy of some six years old. They were unhurt; but close to them lay, in the agonies of death, a young and handsome woman, beside whom, on the same mat, slept sweetly and unconsciously a little babe.

"It is the spouse of the chief," said Boodun-bee, the wife of the Soobadar, "she has been dangerously ill for some days, and her husband promised me bushels of pearls and pecks of rubies if I would but bring her to health, and protect her child. Ufsos! alas! she is dying; see her hands are gathering the dust of her undug grave! but she is a Moossulmanee, and I will close her eyes; yea! and so help me Alla, be mother to her infant daughter!" And the good lady rose up, waved her arms thrice over the head of the child, significant of her adoption of it, and then knelt by the dying woman. Once the poor creature attempted to speak, once she raised her hand, every finger of which was loaded with jewels, but death was stronger than life or love, and in the next moment she was a corpse.

"Behold, sahib!" said the good Boodun-bee, "this is my daughter!" and she uplifted the still slumbering babe and kissed it. It was a fair young thing, almost of European fairness, but with that rich tinge of blood in the skin which, in after-life, is so beautiful in the higher castes of Hindoo and Mahommedan women.

"*La how'la walla koowatta illa billa!* There is no power like unto Alla's!" ejaculated Boodun-bee. "Look here! on the child's breast is a flower-mark; it is the Nargis of the Goolshun—the lily of the rose-garden. Let her name be therefore Nargisi!"* And so the little girl received its pretty name, which Anglicised would be Narcissa!

That night was passed cheerfully enough by us in

* The Narcissus.

the old fortalice of Ameerkote, but not until we were seated at our somewhat scanty repast did we recollect that it was our Christmas dinner. We laughed heartily as we cut up a pea-fowl, which had been shot in the jungle in the course of the day, and which proved not the most tender of ornithological food; a plentiful and savoury curry of young kid was our substitute for roast beef; we had rice in abundance; the Soobadar's lady had tossed us up some excellent banana fritters, by way of plum pudding; and for bread we were disposed to be thankful for some thin cakes, prepared by one of the sepoys from the sweet but dark meal of the *Bajree*—the seed of the *Pencillaria vulgaris*. But, on the other hand, every officer had one varlet in attendance, who had not forgotten the legitimate flask of brandy, wherewithal a glass of good grog was severally brewed. Sugar there was no lack of; limes, odorous and acid, grew plentifully in the Killadar's garden; and our dessert was composed of some delicious Carissa berries, ripe, black, sub-acid, and juicy—plucked in the jungle—with a bunch or two of good plantains. It was my first Christmas dinner in India, and I was exactly eighteen. At that age enjoyment does not depend upon soups and stews and roasts, nor was there one of us who did not merrily retire to our mats and *charpaees*—bedsteads—with a contented mind.

Next morning beheld us on our return to Chanda. We might have advanced half-way thither, when some accident which happened to the litter in which Boodun-bee and her double charge were being conveyed, compelled the bearers to set it down in order

to repair it. I happened to be in charge of the rear-guard, and rode back unattended to hasten the process. I found the task completed, and was on the point of turning my horse's head, when a wild and haggard man, half-naked, turbanless, his long black hair waving dishevelled down his shoulders, sprang from the jungle that skirted the road; and, as the bearers drew back in alarm, rushed towards the litter, whence with a sudden grasp he seized the little foundling, and amidst the shrieks of the terrified Mussulwoman, was bearing it away, when I dashed my horse towards him, having no time to draw the useless sword, with which it pleased the Honourable Company at that period to supply its officers by way of defence. Fortunately for me my steed swerved as it reached the bush behind which the fellow lurked, by which chance a spear levelled at me missed its mark, leaving the leveller defenceless, as I imagined. I sprang from my charger, and picking up the spear pursued him through the low but thick brushwood, when, with a fearful yell, stooping to the ground, he picked up a huge stone and flung it with all his might at me. It hit me on the left shoulder with such force that I fell, but in the next moment a section of the Nagpore troopers were with us; the child was forsaken as suddenly as it had been seized, and, dashing with the facility of a panther through the jungle, the man escaped. The wailing infant was conveyed once more to her protectress, who in the assailant recognized a stern and gloomy attendant of the robber chieftain's wife, who seemed to hold some inexplicable but important

office amidst the band, which, to a man, obeyed his behests and shuddered at his frowns. Upon inspection, my shoulder presented a very decided but ingloriously received wound. The sharp heavy stone had cut through my jacket and inflicted a deep ugly gash, which bled freely. I must frankly own that it caused more mirth than sympathy among my messmates.

II.

My story now takes a leap over sixteen years of many changes; but the monotonous routine of military life, apart from such duties as concluding in adventures that can be classed no otherwise than as oases in the desert, once more brought the regiment, in which I now bore the title of Captain, into the territories of the Rajah of Nagpore. We were stationed at Seetabuldee, under the command of Major Wolfe—the same officer who, then holding only a company, had directed the attack on Ameerkote. The orphan daughter of the Pindaree *sirdar*, for so we chose to suppose her, had grown up into rare grace and beauty, under the fostering care of Boodunbee. That worthy dame, contrary to the usages of high caste women in those days, had formed a friendly alliance with Mrs. Wolfe, the kind wife of our commandant, who had thus frequent opportunities of judging of the disposition and character of the lovely Nargisi; whom she described as possessing the most endearing qualities, linked with a share of personal charms seldom equalled. The son of Yoosef Khan, reared with her in that "behind the *purda*," or cur-

tain, intimacy which befits brother and sister, had soon learnt to distinguish her by an ardent affection by no means fraternal, to which she happily responded; and the parents looked with pleasant eyes on a passion so pure and promising.

The youth himself, by name Hafez Khan, had recently been promoted to a Naigue-ship in my company,—a rank which may be named "corporal" in English. He was, in truth, a fine young fellow, a great favourite in the regiment, to every member of which, since earliest boyhood, he had endeared himself by an earnest attention to his duties, a gallant conduct on several important occasions, and a bright cheerful manliness of disposition, which never deserted him. He was a handsome youth, too, with a strong dash of the poet and the musician in his nature, for he became celebrated in the ranks as the author of sundry *rekhtas* and *roubaees* (odes and sonnets), that soon became popular, and which he sang in a clear musical tenor, to the accompaniment of his own *vina*. He spoke and wrote the English language with a fluency seldom attained by the better class of sepoys, who are generally indisposed against any exhibition of an acquisition that is too frequently —or was, in those days—confined to low caste menials and Paria drummers. Indeed Hafez was of so superior an intellect that it was with no common interest we heard that finally the great festival of betrothment had been held, which affianced him to Nargisi, the foundling of Ameerkote. His father, now far advanced in years, and some twenty summers the senior of his wife, had recently subsided on the pen-

sion list; and as about this time the regiment was ordered "down country," to Bangalore, old Yoosef Khan—a native of that place—resolved to accompany us till fairly out of the Nizam's territories, where solitary travelling might subject his family to perils from which the Company's districts are free. Once beyond the boundaries, he determined to precede us, thus avoiding a dilatory march with troops; the fair *Doolhun*, or Betrothed, forming of course part of his goods and chattels.

It so happened that a few weeks previous to our departure from Sectaboldee, a guard of honour was detached from the battalion, to accompany General —— to Secundrabad, and in compliance with the formula of the roster Naigue Hafez Khan was detailed for this duty. It was not then his fortune to be with us when we marched, but as our route led through Secundrabad, he would probably be detained there to await our arrival. What was still more unfortunate, however, was that his father was unable to fulfil his intention of starting with us, having been seized with sudden illness, which rendered delay indispensable: it was not, therefore, until ten days after we left the cantonment that he was able to begin his journey, and consequently he had not the advantage of being accompanied by any guard; resolving, however, to make long stages in order that he might overtake us, which he could easily do, as a marching regiment, in times of peace, is obliged to halt every fourth day, so that the baggage-cattle, &c., may not be knocked up.

We had passed the Kistna river, and were now in

the territories of the Nizam, within a march or two of Hydrabad, when one evening of a halt tidings reached us that Soobadar Yoosef Khan had arrived at Balconda, the village we had left the morning before, in a pitiable condition. He had been attacked by *looties*, plundered, and his daughter slain! The tidings were conveyed to us by a messenger from the old native officer, who had made a statement of the case to the Potail, or Headman, of the village,—a very active official; by whom it had been reported without delay to the nearest British authority capable of rendering assistance in the way of pursuit of the plunderers.

Colonel Wolfe could do no more than aid in helping forward the afflicted family, and as the village where they were now detained was but a dozen miles distant, several of the officers obtained leave to ride back and see how matters really were; for we all felt great concern to hear of the death of poor Nargisi. As to myself I had somehow got to consider her as more peculiarly belonging to me, seeing that I was, as it were, the first who set eyes upon her, when yet an infant she had never been beheld by a white man. As usual, however, on our arrival at Balconda, where we found the Soobadar and his wife, in great sorrow, we discovered that report had magnified misfortunes which, in themselves, contained a sufficient amount of calamity to cause anguish to all concerned. Nargisi had been carried off, but no lives had been endangered, and the circumstances were as follows. On the solitary road leading to Balconda, where the battalion had been so

recently encamped, the covered *gâree* or waggon, which contained Boodun-bee and her adopted child, with a young female attendant, was suddenly attacked by a body of ill-clad men, who paying no heed to the goods and baggage, which lay at their disposal, succeeded in forcibly carrying away Nargisi, after having gagged herself, her protectress, and the servant. The Soobadar who followed slowly on a tattoo (pony), came up just in time to hear the crushing leaves in the jungle beneath their departing footsteps. His efforts to follow them up for even a few paces were useless; they had disappeared as if by magic, in the deep fastnesses of the forest. From the waggoner and his son, who had crouched down amongst the bushes until the robbers had departed, he learnt what had occurred; and on releasing the terrified females from the galling bonds with which they had been roughly manacled, hand and foot, Boodun-bee assured him that Nargisi appeared to be the sole object of their cupidity.

"You remember," cried his wife to me, as I attempted to soothe her, "the wild-looking scoundrel who tried to force away Nargisi from us at the Pindarees' fort, and who was so nearly being the cause of your death.—Well, Sahib, upon my head and eyes be it, he was the leader of the crew; I knew him at once, though he was disguised as a Fakeer; wore the usual dress of that order of mendicants; and, of course, looked older and more haggard, for his hair is now white, and his skin smeared with paint and powder! Oh, I am sure that my child is in his power! He will not slay her, but she will die of

despair, and what will become of my poor Hafez?" What indeed could be done more than to represent the affair in the most forcible manner to the civil and military authorities at Secundrabad, nor was any time lost in forwarding statements of the case, with earnest requisitions for such prompt assistance as was desirable in a predicament so rare.

On our arrival at Secundrabad we found that our destination was altered. We were to remain there; and as I had long been entitled to a holiday, I solicited and obtained a month's leave of absence, professedly to go on a shooting excursion. My plans, however, were kept private; for I knew that if made public, measures might be taken to change my purposes—which were to seek the solitudes of Ameerkote, where I had a presentiment that tidings of the unfortunate Nargisi would be obtained. The suggestive whispers of the imagination are seldom dealt justly with by the uninterested, and I carefully abstained from mentioning the romantic fancies that had impressed me with an idea, that might nevertheless prove an idle fallacy. That a certain amount of danger necessarily belonged to an excursion into territories that were beyond the actual control of the Company, I knew; but I was also aware that there was peace regnant between us and all influential authorities beyond the Kistna, and that bodies of marauders were rarely known to attack an European officer, travelling solely for sporting purposes, without wealth or baggage, and avowedly ranging the jungles as a huntsman. But not only had I been stimulated to this determination by my own imagin-

ings; the state of frantic grief into which the abduction of Nargisi had plunged Hafez was so terrible, that for some days he was threatened with insanity. By degrees I got him to enter into my views, and at last he became more sanguine than myself of discovering her in that part of the country where first she had been found. It was then settled that he should procure leave to accompany me; and well armed for all encounters with the denizens of the woods, we left head quarters one fine morning, nor halted till we had ridden some thirty miles; for I had supplied Hafez with a horse, and sent on several days before a few trusty servants, with a small one-poled tent, a table, a camp-stool, and other absolute necessaries.

A week passed; we had crossed the Kistna, and traversed a considerable extent of country—now halting amidst prairies and woodlands, quivering with game—now passing through towns, fortified villages, and cultivated valleys; but though we had as many ears as harvest, we could hear nothing of the missing bride; and the gloom and anxiety which overwhelmed Hafez, and which, indeed, very considerably impaired my interest in the sports of the field, at length increased to such a degree that he requested permission to proceed alone, disguised as a pilgrim, towards Chanda; faithfully promising to meet me there on a given day. He imagined that by secretly and solitarily making his way, he was more likely to obtain intelligence of her he was in search of, than was possible when accompanied by an European officer and his camp followers. I agreed; and on the

afternoon he left me. Taking my fowling-piece, and unaccompanied, I slowly sauntered into a jungly piece of country, said to be well stocked with game, from lordly bustard to lowly quail. I had walked a considerable way, and with more success than I felt inclined to take advantage of; for being unattended, I did not choose to overload myself with any extra burden, nor did I care to waste my ammunition for the mere love of destruction on the numberless hares, and pea-fowl, and green pigeons that crossed my path, hovered over the rank reed-grass, or swarmed amidst the brush. I began to think it time to turn tentwards, when, as I approached a magnificent banyan tree, that stood in the glady openings of the forest, I saw that at its base a figure was extended, dead or asleep. Certainly not the former, for at the sound of my steps, as they fell on the withered leaves, the gaunt, almost naked form of a Fakeer slowly upreared itself, as if from heavy slumber, with eyes scarcely opened from riveting repose.

"Salaam!" cried I, as I drew near. I shall never forget the spectral appearance of the haggard and fearful looking creature, who, gazing at me wildly, as if dubious whether I was indeed substantial or only a thing of shadows, tardily arose from the ground, with an ejaculation of wonder, which I knew not whether to interpret into an imprecation or a welcome. The man must have been six feet high; almost entirely naked, his lank and attenuated body seemed that of a skeleton, over which a thin skin of glittering brown had been tightly drawn; long gray hair fell down over his shoulders, circles of white

pigment surrounded his large piercing eyes, and a face of singularly marked expression—not without outlines of beauty that were now marred by time and sorrow, and, it may be, crime—recalled to my memory the Pindaree of Ameerkote. Nor was the recognition confined to me. It was mutual! and I was considering whether a renewal of hostilities was likely to mark our unexpected meeting, when he accosted me. I will endeavour to translate his words as best I can, without interlarding them with the customary amount of Hindostanee expressions that could only serve to prolong the narrative.

"*All-hoomd-ool-illa!*" he cried, clasping his hands, and reverentially looking towards heaven.—"All praise be to Alla, who has sent me help at my need!"

"Can I succour you, my friend?" demanded I, not sorry to have our *tête-à-tête* begin so amicably.

"You can help me, Sahib, if Alla chooses," was the answer; "but as Alla forgives us, so, too, must you forgive me."

"What have I to forgive?"

He shook his head. "It needs not that you should try to assume an ignorance which does not exist. The Sahib remembers me even as I remember him. The beardless youth has become a man, and the associate of robbers has turned a wandering penitent, who exists by what he begs, not by what he steals; but neither of us have forgotten."

"Agreed," I exclaimed; "all is forgiven, forgotten, provided you tell me where that poor girl is now concealed—our dear Nargisi?"

"Nargisi!" he said; "you call her Nargisi, and you have named her well. Alas! alas!" and a burst of passionate grief followed, which indeed was most painful to witness. When the paroxysm had subsided, he spoke again, and a condensed statement of his narrative will suffice.

"The mother of Nargisi was my only child. My father was opulent; but all his wealth, to which I became heir at an early age, was squandered in follies and vices. I have lived too long, for I broke the heart of a blameless wife by my conduct; and when at last, reduced to the utmost destitution, I endeavoured to obtain wealth by unlawful means, discovery tore away the veil that concealed my dishonesty, disgrace flung its spotted raiment round me, and an ignominious death awaited me. To purchase exemption from such a fate, I gave my reluctant child to the embraces of a man whose name was rendered infamous by assassination, robbery, and every ignoble vice. His powerful band rescued me from the grave, but only to enslave me in a career of the blackest villany. His fate you know; his wife's, too, you are acquainted with; his child's—Oh, Alla! awful are thy punishments! I tried to force that babe from the Feringhies, but failed. Had I succeeded, I might have learnt for her sake to have restrained my evil inclinations, which had already produced such bitter fruits. But, deprived of the only human being in whom I took an interest, I became reckless; and, assuming the garb of a Fakeer, readily joined any troop of plunderers which, to win my services, offered me remuneration. I minded neither religious

sect nor caste; for the money of the Brahmin I would have taken the life of a Mahommedan saint, and the gold of the highborn Mussulman would have purchased at my hands the life of the holiest follower of Vishnoo that ever sacrificed at the altar of the god. The sahib knows what the Phansigars are?"

"The Thugs?" cried I. "Yes."

"I have been even linked with them in their bloodless, but no less murderous, atrocities. A short time ago I was offered a large sum provided I could place in the hands of a certain sect of Hindoo fanatics, now almost extinct, a young female as a human sacrifice to the goddess Kali. It was decided that I should accompany a party of Thugs, who never ply their dreadful trade on women. By this means I should escape all suspicion; and, whilst my associates undertook the destruction of such males belonging to any company of travellers that might fall in our way, I was to seize any such female as might seem fit for an offering to the hideous Kali. Alas! my comrades saw an aged Mahommedan, accompanied by his wife and daughter, pass our camp; and the leader pointed out the latter as an acceptable gift to the Brahmins of the Black Pagoda at Kaladoorga, my employers. They were prevented from putting into execution their own measures, but succeeded in carrying off the girl. I did not see her until she was delivered over to my custody, stupefied with drugs which they had administered to her; nor did I then suspect that I had ever seen her before. She was conveyed to the Pagoda, where I was chosen to wait

upon her until the day of the sacrificial feast arrived. But there, as I watched her eyes unclose from the pernicious sleep which had been purchased by strong opiates, I saw the jewels that decked her neck, her ears, her arms. I saw and knew them, and, tearing aside the veil that hid her bosom, I beheld the mark which had been born with her! I cannot tell you of the agony, the remorse, that distracted me; neither can I describe the poor child's horror, as, with my head in the dust, I told her the fate which awaited her, and confessed myself before her. I thought of an appeal to the Brahmins, of imploring their clemency, of assuring them that another victim should be provided! As well seek to melt rocks in the crucible of the goldsmith! Their spies were about us, even as we opened our hearts to each other; and I was dragged from her and thrust into a noisome dungeon, where I heard them decide upon my captivity until the sacrifice was consummated. A frantic vigour was imparted to me that night, and I made a solemn vow to Alla to dedicate my future life to holiness, if I succeeded in escaping. I had scarcely repeated the vow before an answer to my supplications was vouchsafed. A noise in a corner of the darksome cell aroused attention, and, groping my way towards it, I found that it proceeded from the scratching of some animal in the adjoining cavern. The place was built of bricks, many of which had crumbled inwards. By dint of hard labour, I displaced as many of them as permitted of my creeping through. My amazement was extreme to find myself in one of those subterranean temples

where the frightful idols of the Brahmins are decorated with the greatest magnificence. It was illuminated by vases of perfumed oil, and on a slab in the centre burnt an odoriferous fire. Here and there were cages containing birds of rare plumage; in one was a large hooded serpent, that hissed at my approach; whilst an ape, leaping about with ireful gestures, menaced me with its claws. It was this creature whose scratching at the wall had excited my attention. High up in the wall, where a gigantic figure of Hunnooman, the monkey deity, abutted against a flight of steps which I had no doubt led to the upper chambers of the pagoda, I perceived a barred window; and springing from the foot to the knee of the idol, and thence to his shoulder, I attained it. The little light that came from this aperture was received from a second orifice above it, evidently belonging to the roof of the exterior temple; but I imagined that I could reach it, and was on the point of making the attempt, when the chattering of the ape arrested my steps. Looking downwards, I perceived that the mischievous creature was endeavouring to force open the lid of those round baskets of matted grass, in which the practised snake-charmer is accustomed to keep his stock of reptiles; and an impulse of curiosity impelled me to ascertain whether the basket before me contained any of those serpents which prove so fertile a source of profit to the juggler. I leaped down, and was soon apprised, by the loud sibilations that hailed me as I touched the lid, that the receptacle was full. Among other arts, I was skilled in all the practical science of the snake-charmer;

and, on examination, I found that all the cobra di capellos, of which there were three, in addition to the one in the cage, had been deprived of their poisonous fangs. The ape, enraged at my approach, had sprang towards a pillar that stood near, and I was about to return to the casement in order to attempt an escape, when suddenly a panel in the pillar, no doubt accidently touched by the animal, flew open, and revealed a narrow flight of steps, ascending and descending.

"It occurred to me that release might be more facile by this means than from the window, and I hastened to make the trial. I soon adandoned the steps which led upwards, finding that they terminated in a small circular chamber, from which, indeed, the whole interior range of the subterranean could be viewed from different apertures — those openings being nothing more than the mouths and eyes of the idols. Descending, then, I came to a passage, scarcely wide enough to admit of more than one individual, and involved in complete obscurity. As I hesitated whether to advance or recede, the sound of water fell on my ears, and I pursued my course. A very few paces more brought me to a twinkle of the light of day, and presently I found myself at the end of the passage, which opened into the thick jungle through a species of narrow cave or tunnel, whence, from a jutting rock, dashed a small cascade.

"I considered that it would be prudent to conceal the mode of my flight from the Brahmins, and, hurrying back to the subterranean, I took the precaution of fixing my girdle and the unfolded lengths of my

turban to the bars of the window, imagining that by these stratagems I might succeed in misleading them into the belief that I had effected my escape by the aperture in the roof—though, truly, I knew not whether such a method was really feasible. Completing this, I returned to the passage, and soon found myself at liberty. Sahib, I have passed a day and a night in fasting and supplication. I have prayed that some plan might be suggested to me whereby my innocent child's life might be preserved. Alla has sent you upon my path. Will you assist me?"

"I swear it," cried I; "but how?"

"The presence of an European officer with me at the very moment when their atrocious sacrifice is about to be made, may be of use. If not, I am still strong, and the Sahib has pistols. The Brahmins are unarmed."

"But how gain admittance to the cell of Nargisi? Rather let me instantly despatch messengers to Captain Crawford, at Chanda, who is, as you perhaps know, the first British officer who has proved the existence of human sacrifices in Hindoostan—hitherto believed to be extinct. His authority is great, and he will render us immediate assistance."

"There is no time, Sahib. The oblation will be accomplished to-morrow night; and Chanda is seventy miles hence. There is no time to save her by such slow measures."

"What, then, is your counsel?"

"I am acquainted," said he, "with all the prefatory rites which must be duly performed before the

grand sacrifice takes place. At dusk to-morrow evening Nargisi will be conveyed, bound hand and foot, to the sacrificial altar. That altar is in front of the fire of perfumed wood, which is kept constantly burning in the underground temple, where, for one hour, she will be left alone. Alone, said I? No—all those hideous reptiles, and others that I know not of, will be let loose around her. The sight may madden, or may kill her; for she knows not that they are powerless; but, from the effects on her, these diabolical worshippers of stones and hideous creatures elicit omens that regulate their proceedings for the coming year. At that moment let us be there; by the same passage through which I contrived my exit, let us enter. Before the priests approach to perpetrate the deed, Alla may endow us with strength to release her. And then I shall have my revenge!"

"Be it so," cried I; "meanwhile Crawford shall be apprised of our intentions, and send us instant aid. If *we* perish *they* shall not escape."

I inquired whether it was not probable that he was under Brahminical surveillance; and, in case his hiding-place was discovered, whether his life was not endangered

"No," replied he; "that is not to be feared. The Brahmins, of no order, take life, save as an expiatory offering to Kali, at certain seasons and at long intervals. Neither must the victim be aged or impure. Such a sacrifice would but bring them evil."

"But the Thugs?" said I.

"The Thugs are not sound religionists of any

sect. No pious Brahmin, conscientious in his faith—no true Moslem, faithful to Alla and the Prophet—ever joins the Phansigars; though the outcasts from all religions and creeds, the reprobate, the thief and murderer, the predisposed by vicious inclinations to cruelty and covetousness, willingly enlist under the fatal banner of the strangling noose. The head Brahmin of the Black Pagoda is a cold-blooded bigot, but he would shrink with horror from associating with the wretches with whom I, alas! have mingled. Yet, with strange inconsistency, he scruples not to purchase the assistance of such assassins in the provision of an innocent victim!"

"And the Pagoda, is it near?"

"Not a mile hence, maharaj! To-morrow evening, an hour before the twilight falls, will you meet me here?"

I agreed, and was leaving him, when, with a finger on his lips and a whispered "*Khamoosh!*—Hush!" he pointed to a conical hillock at no great distance. It was one of those mounds, so frequent in Hindostan, which are constructed by the *termites*, or white ants, and which occasionally rise to the height of several feet. Near it, I observed a shallow dish, containing milk, an egg or two, and a bunch of the sacred Tolasee Plant (*Ocymum sanctum*), whose potent aroma I had for some time been conscious of. I was going to inquire into his meaning, in pointing out the ant-hill, which was clearly abandoned by its original fabricators, when, from the apex, erecting its terrible crest, I saw the glittering and gorgeous body of a cobra di capello slowly emerge!

"Begone, *sahib azeez!* beloved master," whispered he; "the augury is good! That snake shall yet be in my possession. I have laid those tempting baits to wile him from his nest; for, by this means, I shall achieve the act which shall, at least, avenge my child!"

With a vehement gesture he waved me away; and, in complete ignorance of his meaning, I hastened to my tent, to reflect on the service I had, perhaps, rashly undertaken to perform.

My first step was to write to my friend Crawford, succinctly explaining what had occurred, and demanding his immediate interference; at the same time relating the promise I had made, and the attempt that was to be put into execution. I had conferred several kindnesses on the Headman of the town near which I was pitched, and I thought that I might count upon his services in return; nor was I deceived. He instantly despatched a runner with my letter, who, in the method usual in the East, carries at rapid speed that with which he is entrusted to the next village or town, where he hands it over to a similar messenger—always in readiness at the official quarters of the Headman—who, in his turn, follows the same process. I wished heartily that Hafez was now with me, nor was I, at times, wholly free from apprehensions of the result which might accrue from too implicitly resigning myself to the will of so eccentric an individual as the Fakeer. But neither did I wish to recede from my engagement; and without revealing my intentions to my servants, I simply ordered them to have in readiness a *pal*, or

small poleless tent, such as is customary for the wives of travelling natives, as it might be wanted next evening; whilst the worthy Potail, or Headman of the village, who was a Mahommedan, was instructed to place a guard over my own tent, where two respectable Moossulmanee women were required to await a native lady whom I expected.

The hour at length approached when the Fakeer might begin to look for me; and, true to his appointment, I found him seated beneath the banyan tree, his long matted hair gathered together under a plain red turban, the simple dress of a Mahommedan traveller covering his meagre frame, and armed with the keen-edged tulwar and kreese of one who is prepared to defend himself from the attack of an adversary. Beside him rested the round snake-basket, to which pointing, as he proferred a salutation of thanks for my presence, he said, "It sleeps; it is drunk; but by the power of Alla, the high-priest of the Pagoda may succeed in awakening it!"

As we proceeded by a narrow path that, skirting the thickest jungle, led gradually downwards till we reached a barren defile stretching between two steep hills, I asked him by what means was it customary to perform the sacrificial rites.

"Sometimes by fire," he replied, "which is the most fearful. The victim is firmly bound to a pile of fagots, and so consumed; but in such cases she is drugged with hashish, or opium. At other times she is strangled by the application of a cord, fabricated of the sacred roots of the pandanus. A third method remains, and it is one which is likely to be employed

on the present occasion; for I helped to brew (*Alla mooj6 maaf kuro!*—Alla, forgive me!) the bitter draught of death, which inebriates whilst it kills! Alas, sahib! there is not a weed that grows around from which I know not how to extract a bane or a balsam! Would that I had quaffed the goblet of martyrdom, ere I had taught the Brahmin the uses of that fruit which nods now so temptingly over yon rock!"

I looked, and saw a tree whose dark green branches were studded with beautiful round drupes of a bright orange colour. I knew it to be the nux-vomica—the deadly nut of which is immersed in a soft white pulp within the gorgeous and brittle rind. I told him how science had taught mankind to wrest a powerful remedy, in the strychnine principle, from this dangerous fruit, and asked him to point out, as we proceeded, any other plant employed by the poisoners of the East.

"The roots of the *kunneer*," said he, "whose delicious fragrance comes wafted from those beautiful roseate blossoms, supply us with deadly venom; and yon magnificent white flower, which is beginning to shut up its corolla against the night-dews, is rife with death."

I recognised the *Nerium odorum*, or oleander, in the shrubby *kunneer*, whilst the lesser plant, which grew profusely around, laden with rich snowy flowers that exaled a heavy and sickly perfume, was the common *Datura stramonium*. But we loitered not as we talked, and ere long the path again wound into the jungle, already casting an early twilight

around. We had perhaps gone some three miles when suddenly a dark and huge edifice, embosomed in trees, and near which a narrow but deep streamlet ran quietly, broke upon my sight. Only for a moment however did we hold it in view, for suddenly turning down a steep bank by a track no bigger than a great ribbon, the Fakeer bade me follow; through dense brushwood we now went till he paused below a shelving rock, whence dashed a little stream of pellucid water; taking me by the hand and bidding me stoop beneath a sort of natural arch, he led me into a narrow cavity, almost in complete darkness.

"This is the passage by which I left the *Dewul* (pagoda); and now, *Khodawund*—master, listen to me, for it is fitting that you should know what we have to expect. In a few minutes the instrumental music of the Brahmins will commence; at that moment the preparations are nearly completed for leading the sacrifice to the subterranean temple. We shall witness the entrance of the procession, and I need not say how necessary the utmost caution and silence will be. The victim will then be left for a *ghurree*—a space of about twenty minutes—in total solitude, and during this space of time must we endeavour to rescue her, and bear her afar from this fatal building. Should, however, the loud sound of a gong be heard, we must look for interruption, for it is a signal that the head Brahmin approaches unaccompanied to hold discourse with the doomed virgin. In that case we may have to use violence; be ready to assist me with sword and pistol, if neces-

sary; but act not at all unless you see that I stand at fault, or call upon you for aid. It may be that Alla will enable me to save her life without imperilling mine, or—*yours!* The conference over, during which no sound from the subterranean can soar above; for the noise of tom-toms and the shriek of the Kulera horn in the upper temple will drown all other sounds, the High Priest will ring a bell, whose deep clang of unsurpassable volume may be heard for several miles. This is to announce that no space of solitary preparation will be granted to the victim, but that the Brahminical fraternity are to descend at once, to complete the oblation. That bell, Sahib, *must not be sounded,* or we are lost! Another word, and then, onwards! Be not dismayed if the brood of tamed snakes, which are retained in the Pagoda, be let loose and approach you. They are harmless, for their fangs have been extracted. But thine, my pretty pet," (and he tapped the basket which he carried under his arm) "thine are sharp and full of the *zahr-i-dawa*—the venom of revenge!" And as he tapped the receptacle, a harsh hissing sound proceeded from it, while the hateful reptile's movements became so vigorous, that I was glad to be assured the fastenings that retained it imprisoned were of sufficient strength to guarantee our safety.

In another moment such a clangour burst from the interior of the Pagoda, that for an instant I almost believed we were in the midst of the performers. Tom-toms, horns, the dissonant clash of cymbals—I know not how many discordant instruments—formed the diabolical orchestra; and this

deafening overture to the latent tragedy increased in fury as we groped our way till we reached the circular chamber of which he had told me, the crumbling steps to which were scaled not without difficulty. He there led me to an orifice, which he told me formed the eye of an idol, bidding me look down; and then indeed I witnessed a scene which I have no skill to describe. The whole circular extent of a hall of idols was lit up by coloured lamps, rendering hideously distinct the unutterably repulsive and sometimes obscene images worshipped by the Brahmins. A sort of altar, on which gleamed a vessel of burning gums and wood that spread around a rich but suffocating aromatic smoke, stood in the centre, and opposite was a huge door, now carefully closed, the chief entrance to the upper range of temples. It appeared to me but a brief time that I gazed, when the dissonance that had as it were reigned around ceased of a sudden, and the door, flung wide open, gave admission to a band of Brahmins, the centre group bearing on a common *charpaee*, or bedstead, the body of a woman, stripped to the waist, unveiled, but her neck, her arms, covered with jewels; a white sheet, flung across the lower part of her figure, was strapped by silken cords, which bound her firmly to the couch. It was Nargisi, whom, I had not seen since her early girlhood—and whom, in fact, I could not have recognised in the pale, wax-like countenance and shrouded yet symmetrical figure of the corpse-like creature before me.

I do not intend to dilate on all the mummeries and rites that now took place, for I do not recollect them, nor was it easy, amidst the hum of choral

voices, the monotonous wail of a peculiar kind of fife, which now made the predominant music, and the stifling vapours arising from many censers and torches flaring with oily exhalations, to retain my powers of observation. But I recollect that the chief Brahmin made a short oration, in which long life and immunity from all future misfortunes were promised to Nargisi, provided she then and there abjured her creed for that of her exhortator, to which the sole reply being a faint-voiced but decided negative, the High Priest (for so he may be designated) warned her that a short period of solitary contemplation would be accorded to her, at the end of which time she must be prepared to yield her life as an offering to the goddess Kali, unless she altered her decision. I afterwards learnt from the Fakeer that her submission would have no whit changed the murderous intentions of the treacherous Brahmins.

"Be advised," cried the Brahmin; "in a *ghurree's* time let us hear that you consent to become a priestess in the service of the terrible Kali! *Behold her!*"

And I started so violently as he pointed as I thought to myself, that something which I could not discern becoming detached from the idol, to which in truth I was indebted for my place of concealment, fell with a loud crash!

"Alla!" whispered the Fakeer, "all is lost!" But all was not lost, for the group of Brahmins, uttering ejaculations of wonder and awe, with which no word of menace towards their unsuspected audience mingled, we concluded that, as was afterwards proved,

the accident had only served to heighten the dramatic effect of the scene. At the word "*Behold!*" the dreadful visage of the idol had become visible amidst glaring lights of blue and red and yellow, but my movement had shaken off one of the skulls, of which the goddess's skeleton-necklace was composed, which, in falling, bounded from the floor on to the bier-like couch on which Nargisi lay!

And now the crowd of Brahmins filed slowly out of the cavernous temple, leaving their chief alone with the captive.

"Art thou not afraid of death?" he asked.

"I fear nothing but life with such as you," was the reply.

"Think better of it," he added. "Belong to us, and elevated to the dignity of a sacred priestess a life of pleasure awaits you."

"Begone," she cried. "I spurn your offers. I am ready to drink the cup of martyrdom—on my head and eyes be it!"

"Look here," he said. "See what pretty pets I leave with you for sport and amusement until your final decision is made."

And opening, one by one, several baskets of matting, similar to that which now lay close to me, where the Fakeer stood, out leaped and darted and wriggled at least a dozen gigantic serpents! A malignant laugh passed the Priest's lips as the poor girl, who doubtless thought the reptiles were fanged, uttered a piercing shriek, which I had some difficulty in repressing a nervous inclination to echo.

"Take counsel of these wise creatures, or in another *ghurree* you die!"

He departed. The doors closed upon him; and on looking down at the maid I saw that she had fainted. Her poor body had become a field for the hideous reptiles to sport upon, and I shuddered like an aspen leaf in a cruel wind to see the scaly monsters crawl over and across her beautiful chest, chase each other in play around her, and with many hisses twist and twine about the couch that bore her senseless form.

"Now, Sahib, follow me. Be fearless; help me to carry her away, and all may yet be well."

I followed him blindly down the narrow steps and through the dismantled aperture that led into the temple of idols, and had again almost screamed when a cobra di capello, as if indignant at our approach, standing up erect before us, menaced us with expanded hood and gaping jaws. Quick as thought the Fakeer seized it by a familiar knack, and rubbing its revolting head with some fetid gum, it became instantly torpid, lying flat and flaccid on the floor. I helped to cut the cords that bound the still inanimate girl, and in less space than I can tell it, she was safe in the circular chamber that looked down upon an Armageddon unrivalled in horror.

"Why not depart at once?" I demanded, wondering to see that he paused.

"There is yet something to be done," he replied. "Remain here, and if she revives, soothe her. This phial contains an essence of which a few drops will strengthen her."

She lay still lifeless and quiet as a stone, and I could not resist resuming my position on the idol, curious to discover how the Fakeer was occupied. I

beheld him place the basket containing the venomous snake on the couch where Nargisi had lain, and then proceed to a corner of the temple where, suspended from the roof hung a chain: mounting a pedestal that stood near it, he detached the chain carefully, and then I guessed that it communicated with the bell he had described to me as one which must not be sounded while we remained there. At that moment, before he had time to descend, the reverberating clang of a loud gong was heard, and he had scarcely succeeded in concealing himself behind the door ere the High Priest entered.

I shall not readily forget the expression of wild amazement that crossed his countenance, as he gazed on the couch, unoccupied by the victim he had left there; the pervading silence, too, seemed to astonish him; for every one of the reptiles, before so restless and irascible, had been soothed by the Fakeer into quiescent repose. I had not leisure even to consider the great peril that now threatened us by discovery, but I felt that there was safety in the removal of the chain that communicated with the bell, and I continued to gaze as if upon some entrancing melodrama, forgetful even of my charge.

"What is this?" muttered the Brahmin. "Have the gods really been here?" and he fell on his face in supplication. At that moment a shape, gliding noiselessly from the recess behind the doorway, dagger in hand, and hatred in his eyes, stood over him, ready to strike.

I could not but feel that, hypocrite and arch-deceiver as he was, the Brahmin for the time consci-

entiously believed that what had occurred was effected by the agency of the gods he worshipped.

"Brahma!" he exclaimed, "your serpents sleep! your monkey is invisible! your sacrifice has been translated from earth! and here—what hast thou left in her place? What basket—the image of Kali on its lid—is this?"

He arose, took up the basket, and with the strongest emotions of wonder, belief, and reverence depicted on his expressive features, wrenched open the covering. I shiver with the chill of mortal fear as I write what followed. The venomous inmate of that receptacle, the deadly snake, from whose mottled lips no fangs had been extracted, springing angrily from its lair, fastened itself upon the old man's neck. I could see the quick bite, repeated again and again—I could hear the shriek of unutterable dismay and pain that burst from the appalled Brahmin's lips—and then, as he turned round to look for the bell-chain, I could see that he knew he was not in the hands of his gods, but in the power of an enemy, for he rushed frantically to the door, which, ere he reached it, a strong hand had shut against him. All this I witnessed, whilst from the pagoda above came the beat of the tom-tom, the yell of the horn, and the clang of the tambourine.

"No, no, never through these doors shalt thou pass in life, O Brahmin, detested of all Mussulmans!" shouted the Fakeer, as facing his victim he glared inexorably upon him. The priest fell on his face—he writhed in agony, vainly trying to rend the snake from his neck, round which it continued to hiss and twine.

"It is enough," cried the Fakeer. "Your task is over, O destroyer of your worshipper!" and dashing something across the reptile's face and eyes, it fell senseless on the floor, beside the Brahmin, now evidently in that condition of spasmodic coma which is the forerunner of death by snakebite.

It seemed to me now that something of the influence of the Fakeer exerted over the serpent-brood had also power over myself; for though I beheld what no sophistical reasoning of romance could designate by any other name than that of "murder," I neither by sign nor word interfered with the action of the tragedy; nor, when in another moment the Fakeer shook me by the shoulder, as I stood spell-bound, staring downwards, and commanded me to "collect myself, and assist him in carrying our rescued flower away," did I remonstrate, or utter a word in reference to what had passed, but obeyed with the stolid apathy of a slave.

We were, in fact, out of the subterranean and in the forest, under the bright light of the moon, beside the little brook, before I was fully aroused from the inexplicable sort of lethargy that bound me. Then, too, I felt that it was no season for reproof or remark. I became aware, as I helped to bear the light form of Nargisi, that her senses had returned; she breathed again freely, and I could even feel her heart flutter like a struggling bird beneath my hand. She was fully aroused, as we passed the brook; but a few words in such Hindoostani phraseology, as is only used by the strictest followers of the prophet, whispered by the Fakeer, as he poured some drops

from the phial which had been consigned to me, down her throat, seemed to cheer and revive her. He then explained to her, not only his consanguinity, but the manner of her rescue, and how he had been assisted by an old friend of his—an officer of the —9— Regiment.

"True," added I; "a friend who thinks that Hafez Khan loves him—yea, next to Nargisi."

"Alla, Sahib!" exclaimed she, naming me, and clasping my hand. "I know you, and know that Hafèz regards you as a beloved brother. He will thank you for his *Doolhun*, for she can only weep."

In a short time Nargisi was able to walk, supported between us; and, unobserved, we gained my tent, where she was consigned to the tender care of the women, whose services had been secured by the obliging Potail. Tired as I was, and more even by mental labour than mere physical fatigue, I was desirous of assuring the Fakeer that his old age would be redeemed from poverty and hardship by me, though I confessed that his revenge appeared to me to be unnecessarily cruel.

"Khodawund," replied he, "it was written on the Brahmin's forehead that he should die by a Mussulman. He would not spare *her* life who was dearer to me than all the world, and I took an oath of vengeance. What I have done is known to Alla and to you."

"Nay," said I, "fear not that words of mine will involve you in any peril. *I* will not betray you. May God absolve you!"

"I am absolved," he answered; "and, saying to

bless you and all who have nurtured my child, I have little more to say. The few years that remain to me of life I shall pass in acts of penitence and religious duty; and if hereafter the lonely *tekia* (shrine) of an anchoret meets your eyes at the tomb of the holy *Wullee* (saint) which is familiar to all who visit the city of Bangalore, you may quietly recognise a grateful friend in the hermit Ullee Sha, though he may not choose to hear his former callings proclaimed through the streets by sound of trumpet and tambour. The Sahib loves to gather wild herbs —the leaves and the roots that are disregarded by the multitude. The virtues of all are known to Ullee Sha, and he will take pleasure in imparting his knowledge to you. I have already given my benediction to Nargisi; and I now bestow it on you. *Khoda hafez*, farewell!"

And with a low salaam the Fakeer left me, nor did I see him again for many months, when, indeed, as our regiment marched into Bangalore one fine morning, we saw an aged and venerable Fakeer praying devoutly by the wayside near an ancient tomb. His secret was kept, and not seldom had I, and also Hafez Khan, conferences of no vulgar nature with the greatly esteemed Ullee Sha!

But to resume my story. The following morning brought a strong escort of cavalry from my friend Crawford, whom my communication had reached at ——, some thirty miles nearer than Chanda. A portion of the letter which he wrote to me in reply to mine, will supply the next most important links in my little chain of events.

"The Pagoda of Kaladoorga and its inmates have long been under suspicion, and your statement shall hasten proceedings regarding it that have been too long delayed, for want of sufficient evidence. But I have lately been busily engaged in tracking a desperate gang of Thugs, whose assassinations and depredations have been undoubtedly patronized by the head Brahmin of the Black Pagoda; and also by others, whose participation in such crimes was not suspected. A very marvellous accident has thrown the principal Phansigar and his adherents into my power. We had intimations that some suspicious characters, disguised as cloth-merchants, had been seen near Biranore, where yet they had displayed no merchandise for sale. Two opulent tradesmen of that place, expected on their return from Hydrabad, suddenly disappeared; and as it was known they had considerable property on their persons, *Thuggee* was suspected. I sent out my scouts, and they discovered that the suspicious party, consisting of ten men, had since accompanied some rich travellers, who were really laden with goods for sale, on their way to Hydrabad. Determined to follow on their trail in *propriâ personâ*, I assumed a disguise which has frequently been useful to me, and with seven picked men whom I could trust, similarly equipped, pursued the merchants on horseback, until arriving at a village near the borders of the great Mahari jungle, we heard that they had passed by only a few hours before. There I left our steeds under the care of the Potail and a trooper. It was dark when we reached an old serai, near a well, in the heart of the

jungle, and there I had hoped to have overtaken them; but I was too late, and thought it advisable to wait till the first dawn. I accordingly ordered the men to bivouac, and was enjoying my pipe, an hour later, when one of my people drew near. He had wandered a little way into the jungle, when, attracted by voices, he listened, and found that he had unconsciously come upon a party of the very gang we were in search of. From their discourse he gleaned that the unfortunate merchants had been strangled that very evening, and that the rest of their party were even then employed in covering the lifeless bodies of their victims with sand, in the dry bed of a *nulla* (brook). They were eating their rice near a little stream, not a quarter of a mile from our encampment.

"I instantly acted on this information, and quietly and swiftly we were in a very short time afterwards ensconced behind the group of bushes where the Thugs, now preparing for sleep, awaited their comrades. Nor was it long ere a shrill cry, like the first bark of a jackal before it has fairly entered upon its concert of yells, was heard in the woods to our right. 'There they are!' cried one, 'and all is safe.' Another bark was now heard, followed by two similar signals in quick succession: signals which seemed completely to rouse the party near us. 'There's some fresh game in view,' cried a Thug. 'Only one bird in the snare,' said another, 'for the cry of the jackal is but double. Where are the *kodalies*—the pickaxes?'

"'All right,' said the former; 'but the *roomal* is round Bala Ram's waist, whose turn it will be to give our new guest a quiet sleeping-ground.'

"I was not ignorant that the *rooṃal*, or kerchief, was the noose wherewith their victims are strangled, and shuddered as I observed four men issue from the opposite jungle. The Thugs hailed each other with affected joy, pretending that by some mischance they had wandered from the proper path.

"'"'And lo! brethren,' said one of the newly-arrived, 'we have had the good fortune to meet a fellow traveller, who is willing, for the sake of society, to accompany us to Nagpore, and who is, in fact, on the look-out for a kinswoman of his—a young maiden who has been carried away by a band of robbers from her parents, as they were proceeding to Secundrabad. You remember the suspicious men, accompanied by a female, who implored our interference, but was prevented by them from informing us what her grievances were, who met us yesterday? Well, they talked, you know, of going on to Oujain to-night, and if we are astir by the first cry of the quail in the morning, we may chance to come upon them before they start; and none of us will grudge to assist our young friend here, if the girl should prove the right one.'

"The stranger, whose countenance I could not discern, expressed his thanks, and the party seemed busily preparing to bivouac for the night, when one of the new arrivals exclaimed, 'Bala Ram, fetch me a draught of water.' Bala Ram arose, and jingling his *lota* (a metal guglet) as he proceeded to the streamlet, I saw him at the same moment untwist the long scarf that girt his waist, and gather it together in certain folds, whose intention I could better

guess than explain. I whispered to my men, who were breathlessly awaiting my orders, to keep silent until I gave the word of attack, for I saw that the moment was near. Bala Ram made some noise in bringing the water, and, coming towards the four who sat together, their backs towards him, offered the *lota* to him who had demanded it.

"'Perhaps our brother will drink first?' said he, offering it to the stranger, who, rejecting it with thanks, expressed a desire to repose himself, and made a movement.

"'Stop, friend,' said the Thug; 'there are thistles there. Bala Ram will bring the large extra mat.'

"At this moment Bala Ram stood directly in front of me, and a few paces behind the victim, who was, as were the others, in a sitting posture. I saw that but one method was left me; and as I beheld the coiled up noose in the hands of the executioner, I presented my pistol at his head. In another instant the fatal scarf was thrown—I fired—gave the signal for attack—and in less than five minutes the whole, with the exception of one man, were in our power. I found the victim—no other, as long ere this you have guessed, than Hafez Khan—struggling on the ground, the noose round his neck, but without having occasioned any serious injury. Bala Ram, shot through the very topmost pinnacle of his particularly high *pugree* (turban), lay howling behind him; and his comrades, to a man, were in a condition of despicable panic. The jewels which Hafez, with a ridiculous ostentation, bore about his person, had excited their cupidity; but their services in the cause

of Thuggee are over. Hafez will accompany me to your camp before another day terminates, and we hope to be of use to you if you have not already succeeded. Your Fakeer appears to be a daring fellow."

I did not monopolise the contents of this letter, but had the intense satisfaction of obtaining the consent of the fair Nargisi—perfectly recovered from all the fear and fatigue with which her strange and perilous adventure had for a time overwhelmed her—to interpret the intelligence it contained to her in person. A very graceful creature she was! a very gentle, modest, yet dignified girl! and, although a Mussulmanee, not concealing that the frequent society of good Mrs. Wolfe had, in some measure, influenced her opinions regarding the *sahiblogue* (British gentry) most favourably. But my tale is almost told.

In a few hours Hafez was my guest, and Captain Crawford, fine fellow as he was, assured me that there should be no future sacrifice of human life at the Pagoda; and I have reason to know that he kept his word. Nevertheless, there was a report that the head Brahmin of that establishment had died during the celebration of an important holy rite, which was interpreted as an omen of the most favourable kind!

Safely arrived at head quarters, it was not many weeks thereafter when, in the lines of our regiment, a grand festival was held on the occasion of the *shadee*, or marriage, of Hafez Khan, newly promoted havaldar, to the adopted daughter of the retired Soobadar, his father. And now that some

ten years have passed since then, I can truthfully assure my readers, that both Hafez and his *one*, his *only* wife—the still lovely Nargisi—are alive and blest in each other; not the less happy for being surrounded by a thriving group of little Mahommedans and Moossulmanees, who call them *Ma-Baap;* i e., Mother and Father.

A MUEZZIN-SONG.

NOON is coming:—brightly gleaming
Sunshine, without cloud or screen,
Sends its golden banners, streaming
O'er dark heath and coppice green.—
Day is on us, Light around us,
Life with all its varied hum;
Up, and work! for Rich and Poor
There is One without the door
Calls for "labour" ever more!
Up! Night's slumbers, which have bound us,
Break,—for Day is come!

TWILIGHT cometh:—Birds are winging
Treewards to their leafy inns;
Cattle lowing, milkmaids singing—
Lo! the Bat its flight begins.—
Twilight brings the merry voices
Of the village fife and drum;
But pale Evening, too, hath duties—
Leisure loveth Thought's grave beauties,
And the Hymn (which never mute is
In the Thankful Mind) rejoices
That gray Eve hath come!

NIGHT is coming:—Upwards gazing,
What a field of stars is there!
Prayer its humble hands is raising,
Whispering words that enter—*Where?*
Ask not!—They shall reach a Hearer
Where God's music ne'er is dumb!
Work, and hope, and smile, and pray—
Pass thus manfully the day,
Thanking HIM for health, and say
"Earth's rest near and Heaven's rest nearer,
'Tis well that Night hath come!"

And the Night will pass: in shadow
One would never rest for aye!
In dark lane, as on light meadow,
Welcome is the dawn of Day!
Labour calls:—even *thou* shouldst labour,
Thou, the rich, for there are some
Who, poor and sick—thine aid require,
Clothing and food, a roof, a fire—
Which thou canst give them! Lo, thy Neighbour
Calls thee! Morn is come!

HOW A TRUE POET IS MADE.

The Bird, when ripe, will soar and sing,
The Bard, when Grief matures his mind
Will from his Heart's heaped treasures bring
Thoughts, fit to teach his Adam-kind;
And—set to music—they will turn
To strains the willing crowd shall learn.

But not till then—Oh! not till Care
Hath stared him sternly in the face,—
Hath fettered him to real Despair
That scorches with a fierce embrace,—
Oh! not till then can poet give
The song by which his fame shall live!

We learn to sing, as Nightingales
Are said in Eastern tales to do;
To many a Cross by cruel Nails
Our spirits must be bound, ere true
To Poesy and Nature, we
A Rose's grace can sing, or see!

Then haste not Thou who, in thy soul
Ambitious art of poet's meed,
To woo the Prophet's strange control—
To gauge the depths of human Need;
For thou shalt—if a Poet born—
Learn all too soon how Crowns are worn!

With heavy brows and aching hearts
Our Anadems we wear,—for they
Bear that around them which imparts
A spiritual suffering, night and day;
A sense to see, a touch to feel
Sorrows they have no skill to heal!

Yet Grief, yet Pain, may visit all,
Though few possess the Poet's power
To bid soft strains of Music fall,
That sooth man's dark and moody hour:—
We may not pity him who hath
One Song to cheer his onward path!

But, Poet, if thy lesson well
From Trial and from Pain thou'st taken,
I need not teach thee what the spell
By which their influence may be shaken—
I need not tell thee *what* the Book
In which for comfort thou must look!

Not Praise of men, not Laurels bound
By Beauty's fingers on thy brow—
Not all the Charms that throng around
The circle where Fame's torches glow—
Can chase a pang, or change a sin,
Or make a healthy life *within!*

When thou hast learnt thy hymns to raise
To God—whose Book, thy Harp beside,
Shall teach it such high Chants of Praise
As soar beyond all human Pride—
Then Christ thy Theme, and Love thy Creed,
Thou shalt a Poet be indeed!

ON THE ALERT.

"Good night, and be on the alert!" It was during the heat of the Pindaree warfare—a very tiresome, and tiring, and demonstrative campaign—but no more to be compared with such "episodes in war-life" as have since prevailed—as *now* prevail—than a rabbit hunt in a warren to a battle of tigers in the forests of Asia, or a series of duels with angry rattle-snakes in a cedar swamp. We were encamped near the hill-fort of Jalore, whither we had pursued the

enemy, and which only the advent of night had prevented us from attacking. We knew that its only strength consisted in its position at the top of a steep rock, where, however, it stood without any of those advantages of fortification which are derived from nature or bestowed by art. We were not, however, aware that on the opposite side it was approachable by a broad ravine which would have afforded no shelter from lurking assailants, as it was entirely destitute of timber; whereas a tolerably dense jungle extended to the right of our camp, and the cliffs in front of us were not naked of underwood. The brigade of which I formed a unit consisted of two regiments of Native Infantry and one of cavalry, with a proportion of artillery, nor could a finer body of men be selected from the Madras army. As the incidents I am going to relate chiefly took place in that brigade, I shall have little to say of any other part of the force.

"Be on the alert," said the field-officer, as he retired.

Yes! it is all very well to say that. A very necessary order, thought I, as I paced to and fro on my post. I was in charge of an outlying, or outline (which is it?), picquet facing that quarter where danger seemed most likely to crouch, tiger-like, in the fastnesses of jungle that ran hither and thither to our right, as if the very trees were cunningly scuttling about to harass our most exposed flank. If nothing else had kept me on the alert, I was sensible of the presence of a ravenous appetite, which had not been fully satisfied for nearly twenty-four hours, to do so. A handful of parched

peas, a few heads of chowlum, stolen from the field, a draught of muddy water, had formed my sole sustenance, for my usual faithful attendant had somehow disappeared, and was perhaps in the hands of the enemy, with all the essentials he might have in preparation for a hearty meal. It is true, that amongst my brother officers I could have safely looked for a share, but they were not aware of my missing valet; and whilst, after a long day's toil and travel, they were now reposing, in the expectation of sundry extempore stews and curries, I had been hurried off on picquet duty for no other reason than because Smithers had been suddenly seized with a fit of colic, as was his wont on more occasions than I can name, when, as I suspected, he was as well as myself. It was a rare dark night; and having posted my sentinels to the best advantage, and seen that the men were not quite so destitute of provisions as myself, I began to grope among a few bushes, beneath which I had flung my cloak, in search of some possible berries. The trees, however, were myrobolans; and as I crunched the acid, astringent fruit, that reminded me of unripe sloes, I longed for a pitcher of pure cold water; for experience had taught me that the strange nature of the myrobolan is to fill the mouth with a surpassing sweetness after imbibing a draught of the refreshing element. So I looked about for what I could not see in the dark, but what my ears told me was not far off—a rill of water; and erelong the *lotas*, or copper goblets, of the men, were filled from the welcome flood, and I had a refreshing wash, as well as drink, ere I sat down on my cloak,

determining, with all my might, and all my undiminished hunger, "to be on the alert." An hour might have passed, and, tired of walking up and down in the dusk, I felt all my cautious apprehensions of night-attacks and unexpected onslaughts subside under the stronger influences of fatigue and drowsiness; so, flinging my cloak on the dry ground beneath a tree, within a few paces of which a sentinel walked, and resolving manfully to keep wide awake, I fell asleep.

How long I slept I know not—perhaps half an hour—but the report of a musket, discharged, as I imagined, right over my head, aroused me, and ere the smoke had cleared away from the sentry's *bundookh*, I was up beside him, and the men equally on the alert. A sound of many footsteps in the jungle to our right led us to conclude that a portion of the enemy were advancing, and presently from the camp came noises that proved our signal had been heard. Suddenly there was a rush of animals from the threatening quarter, which dispelled our suspicions, the foe proving to be only a score or two of frightened buffaloes, which, dashing through our picquet, and on to the camp, upsetting more than one tent in their progress, created a sensation which partook more of gluttonous cupidity for the flesh pots of Jalore than of warlike anticipations. What had caused the fright of the herd was another matter, nor was the mystery solved; but they became so stupified by terror on finding themselves amongst us, that more than one became lawful *loot* (booty) to the men, who, by dint of cord and rope, contrived to catch them, thereby insuring a meal for the morrow.

As midnight drew on, and the excitement of this affair subsided, the officer of the day made his rounds; and as he laughingly bade us continue on the alert, I made up my mind to resign all thoughts of slumber for that night. All again was quiet; not a sound from the woods save of a fluttering bird returning to its roost, whence it had been disturbed by the buffalo-panic. The stars, too, had brought light into the sky, whence it shed all around us a flood of clear atmospheric lustre that brought out the features of the scene with an effect which daylight could only have succeeded in dispelling. By and by the moon added a bright tint to tree and backward rock, and above the lower scrub, upon the peaks of the hill on which the fort sat dominant, might be discerned some gloomy bastions, white and spectral pagodas, and the craggy fissures of precipitous heights, where reposed or watched the enemy. I walked about, watching the changing colours, and began to drink in with a sort of thirst the cool night air, laden with the perfume of jungle flowers. Unintentionally, I wandered farther and farther from my men, picking, as I proceeded, the ripe and refreshing berries of the lesser jujube bushes, which, revealed by the moonlight, grew profusely around; until, recollecting that "to be on the alert" required a return to the picquet, I was about to turn back, when, all at once, some thick garment was thrown over my head, I was flung on the ground, muffled up like a mummy, unable to speak, unable to move, for every struggling limb seemed to be under the perfect control of a superior strength, and in the completest silence—a silence

which had not been broken from the beginning—I felt myself lifted up, as if by the arms of dumb spirits, and fairly carried away!

Spirits they might be, but dumb were they not; for as soon as the stupefaction which my surprise had momentarily caused had subsided, I heard the hum of voices, not loud, indeed, for they spoke in suppressed tones, but, as it seemed to me, mixed with laughter, and occasional imprecations—the latter in good, sound, unspiritual Hindoostanee. I will not attempt to describe the feelings of shame and uneasiness that distracted me; but at length, so nearly allied became those feeling to suffocation, that in my violent efforts to relieve myself from the unwieldly wrappings that oppressed me, I contrived, I suppose, to let my bearers feel that I possessed feet clad in boots, for suddenly the upholding sustainers were withdrawn, and I fell on the ground with a bump, that, but for the preservative woollen coverings which enmeshed me, might have endangered my bones. In another moment I was released, to find myself the ridiculous centre of a troop of warlike men, Mahrattas, Rajpoots, what not, whose array and trappings proclaimed them part and parcel of the refractory Jant Rao, chief of Jalore.

As I wriggled up from my undignified lair, I must have presented a truly ludicrous object to their eyes, which they were not loath to welcome with bursts of laughter, and that eloquent jactation of the saliva which is their most peculiar and least pleasant mode of evincing contempt. My sword was gone,—my cap crushed over my forehead, from which trickled

blood from a few slight scratches,—and as I started to my feet, still giddy, and was greeted with a "*Bytho, lowndey!*" (Sit down, female slave!) such a rush of madness and idiotic fury came over me and my beardless eighteen years, that, oblivious of all prudence, I struck the speaker, a stalwart, bearded Mahratta, who could have squeezed me in his palms —such a blow with my fist as would have done no discredit to the most promising pupil of a professional pugilist. Amazement for a moment made him mute; the next, I lay at his feet, felled by a stroke of his huge shield. At first I imagined I was slain, but the blow had only aroused into activity the dormant organ of caution, and I lay in expectation of instant assassination. The men were evidently disputing about me; a discussion was going on as to what was to be done with me, and I had a sufficient knowledge of Hindoostanee to understand the greater part of the conference.

"*Mâro, Mâro!*" (Slay, slay!) "Hang the white dog to yonder tree!" "Stab him to the heart!" and a fourth voice—that of him whom I had assailed—filled me with unspeakable terror, for it proposed a fate still more dreadful:

"Keep him till we reach the town; he is but a girl-like youth; he will do to guard the zenana of some Mahommedan prince, and we can sell him after we—*have prepared him* for such an office!"

I wonder now whether they were only quizzing me! I know not; I only know that their confabulation was interrupted by the report of many muskets in the direction of the camp; bugles were blown and

drums were beaten, and I understood that my absence had been discovered, the alarm given, and perhaps an attack had been made on the picquet and advanced posts. I saw that apprehensions of pursuit began to overwhelm the party, which amounted to some thirty men, and presently I was roughly seized by the arms, and hurried still more roughly onwards, by two fierce-looking fellows, who, keeping in advance of the others, forced their way through bush and brier at a speed little short of a run. At the end of a ravine, we came upon the steep ascent, which led, as I concluded, to the hill-fort; here they blind-folded me, and the distance seemed to me interminable ere we came to a stop. At times I experienced such fatigue and faintness, that but for the cruel help of my conductors, I should have sunk exhausted. I say "cruel," for they struck me as I lagged, dragged me on with a force that nearly rent my arms from the shoulder, and more than once I felt the point of a lance, delivered with an oath. Truly, when at last I was deposited on the final step of the ascent, I felt very much inclined to justify the appellation of "slave-girl" which had been applied to me, by indulging in a feminine shriek and swoon; for when I was divested of the fillet with which my eyes had been covered, I was flung with such a shock against the walls of what I discovered to be a sort of turret-chamber, that I had some difficulty in repressing an ejaculation of agony.

The chamber was probably an outer guard-room, for we found it occupied by armed men, busily preparing either for *fight* or *flight!*—I knew not which,

for now they chiefly conversed in the Mahratta tongue, and I was completely at fault: but I soon became aware that some panic had seized them, that all were hurrying to leave the place, and, as the noise and confusion overhead increased, I could not help surmising that they were about to make an attack on our troops, or preparing to abandon the fort as untenable.. It was now broad day, but as I lay on the floor, I could only discern that a numerous body of men passed constantly by the door, winding to the right of the hill, and not descending by the path by which we had approached. My conductors looked sullenly at me, death in their eyes, still seeming to hesitate in their purposes. One of them drew his sharp two-edged *kreese*, and was about to plunge it into my heart, when a person, who seemed to exercise some superiority over the others, entered, issued some orders in a resolute voice, and I was again seized, my arms pinioned closely to my body, and hurriedly led up a flight of steps in the chamber. For a moment we stood in the open air, upon a sort of platform which overlooked the country; but no opportunity of reconnoitring was afforded me, for I was thrust down into an opening in the midst of the platform, and fell heavily on what, fortunately for me, was a heap of grain, whilst above me I heard the loud sound of a closing trap-door, and I found myself alone in a species of dungeon or cave, or, still more likely, a granary for corn, but of small size, and only lighted by a narrow slit in the wall.

I had reason to be thankful for even the violence with which they had flung me down a height of some feet;

and my first words, heart-spoken by that voice which only God can hear, were a thanksgiving to Him who, from apparent evil, can still elicit good! The fall had burst the cords which had pinioned my arms, and it was not long ere I rid myself of them, though my flesh was cut by the cruel ropes, and I was now covered with scars and bruises. I staggered towards the loop-hole, by which alone light entered the place, but it was above my reach; and sick to death, worn by long fasting and excitement of no pleasureable kind, I must at last have achieved my swoon, for I became senseless, and so I remained for some hours, as it afterwards turned out. Not that all that time I was void of thought or feeling, but I had no power to move, to speak, to act, and was virtually paralysed. When I came to myself more completely, I knew that time must have passed from the advancement of the light across my dungeon; but all was silence; not a sound from the fort above me, or the pass beneath me; and a fearful emotion swayed my thoughts as I felt that I was probably doomed to perish, unsought for by my friends, forgotten by my foes, in that vault! Hunger, which sickness had for a time dissipated, returned; and there was, providentially, no chance of starvation, for grain, chowlum, and maize, and some gram (peas or lentils), were heaped around me; but *thirst!*—and I began to feel its dreadful pang; and lo! once more, as if to tell of the ineffable mercy of Almighty Power, as I groped on hands and knees across the cell, my touch encountered a basket; *it was full of tamarinds!* And again thankfulness sent the words of devout submission to my lips!

But time passed, and the shadows lengthened until they reached the remotest nook of my prison, until, resting there for a time, they disappeared as if they and light together had been there entombed! Day was then over, and with it hope! Although the cravings of hunger were satisfied, and thirst allayed by the refreshing contents of the tamarind pods, impatience, anxiety, and even deadly fear returned. I had carefully examined my cell, which had no other outlet than the trap-door by which I had been precipitated into it, and which only by a ladder could have been reached. Nothing but grain did it contain; all was stone; yet inwards the wall seemed but the natural stone of the living rock, unaided by masonry; the outward wall, in which was the slit or loop-hole, was of brickwork, and built up to form this granary in the cliff. I need not attempt to describe the painful feelings that overwhelmed me, almost to the destruction of manliness; but though I now knew that there was an end of all hope of release for the day, I remembered that a morrow might come; and oh! how earnestly I prayed that "joy might return with the morning!"

I slept and soundly; no dreams disturbed my rest, which must have been unusually long, for there was a bright ray of light pouring in upon me when I woke. Again and again I searched my cell—again and again endeavoured to detect some opening, or instrument by which one could be made—and some hours may have passed, when suddenly the hum of voices, remote and sounding much like a murmur of many bees, assailed my ears from the

loophole. There were people without, and I cried aloud for assistance; I bawled till I could bawl no more; I threw handsful of grain out of the fissure;—but all was in vain. Silence returned again, and with it, stronger than ever, the fit of despair that, for a brief space, had quitted my soul. Then, all of a sudden, came a shock—a crash—that flung me on my face, while around me some direful chaos seemed to be forming! A thunderclap, was it? Nay, louder than any thunderbolt, and causing pain so intense by its effects, that every joint in my body felt dislocated. An earthquake surely!—a roar as of many cannon!—and round me the walls are shaking—those in front are crumbling—between displaced stones breaks through dust and ashes the daylight. For shelter I stagger to that end of the cave where the sides are of the natural rock, and, as I crouch in horror, lo! the roof melts asunder—the very floor gives way—all but the limited space, not two yards in circumference, that holds me. I sat amidst a pile of ruins; the sky is above me, the hot sun looking down upon a scene of unimaginable confusion—yet I am saved. The rocks, which have fallen on either side, hem me in; but they fell not on me. Immured within their boundaries I may be, but they crushed me not! I clung to the backward mass of stone, for I became dizzy as I looked below, where, sheer and precipitous, the mountain ran down into the deep black ravine, into which a fall would be death. The shock, of whatsoever nature it might be, had destroyed all traces of the path by which I had been led; and in far less time than I have taken to write down twenty

words of this narrative, the mysterious work of destruction had begun and finished! I tried in vain to read the riddle; was it an earthquake? No; there was smoke, and over the rubbish accumulated to my right glared the reflections of fire. It was then an explosion; a shell, a shot, had fallen into some depôt of ammunition belonging to the fort. Yes, that was it!

Well, I was free—free on a rock so surrounded by massive superstructures of ruin on all but one side (and there the depth of the descent was so immense, and the cliff so steep, escape was impossible), that I saw as little chance of release as if I still remained a denizen of my prison. Ah! doubting heart of man, be still. What is that sound? A bugle—the martial call of my own regiment—and hark! drums are beating far down below—troops are winding at the very foot of this precipitous pass! As they neared, I shouted wildly. I might as well have leaped down at once; they could not hear me. I tore off my jacket; I flung down fragments of stone; I stood up on the extreme edge of the narrow platform until I became giddy, and nearly overbalanced myself as I waved my jacket and shouted. At length there was a shout in response; and then, as the troops wound onwards and, as it seemed, upwards—for I could not see them by reason of the piled-up ruins that flanked me—I felt that I was saved.

And, long though the time appeared to me, the season of refreshing came, and by the prompt aid of pioneers, and men, and officers, I was within a few hours once more among my messmates, most un-

questionably the "Cynthia of the minute," and the "cynosure of" their eyes for that one day.

It happened that, soon after my capture, a body of the enemy, in attempting to pass the flanks of our brigade, was utterly destroyed, whilst from some of the prisoners taken it was surmised that I had fallen into the hands of a party of them which had returned to the fort, doubtful of effecting a passage past our camp. From those prisoners it was ascertained that the fort of Jalore had been evacuated in the early part of the night, the enemy retreating by that broad ravine on its farther side, of whose existence we were previously ignorant. Late in the day my regiment had received orders to occupy the abandoned fortress on the following morning, and it was on their approach to it that the explosion took place so providentially early, for an hour later its effects might have decimated half the corps. As it was, they little knew that it would emancipate from darkness and a lingering death a brother officer; and when first my attempts to attract their attention became successful, they had not a suspicion that the claimant on their sympathies was myself. As they drew near the top of the cliff, two bodies, fearfully mutilated and scorchêd, were found: they were Mahrattas, discoverable only by their shields and tulwars, for their very heads were blown into fragments. It was supposed they were deserters, or probably sick men, who could not accompany the retreating force; but how the explosion of what must have been a huge magazine was occasioned, never was known. The time came when the affair formed a subject for much

and frequent mess-gossip, and I never thereafter mounted a night-guard without being very strenuously recommended to keep "on the alert!"

"Yes, my boy, don't straggle into the jungle in search of figs and raisins by starlight, but be sure to be more ON THE ALERT!"

SUMMER.

Sun-gold within her hair young Summer sings,—
And the gay Descant rings
  O'er many a daily path, till Night
Clothes her, an Amazon most fair,
In moony armour quaint and rare,
  By Cynthia fashioned in her halls of Light.

Blue-eyed, young Summer smiles upon the Earth,
Which in its glee sends forth
  A troop of Flowers to say "All hail!"
And scatter sweetly, as they pass,
Odours, that wile from bush and grass
  Bees and bright-pinioned flies, which flutter in the gale.

Light-footed as a Fay young Summer dances,
The while to sweet romances
  The Nightingale attunes her voice
In woods where heat-struck Deer repose—
Where, tinkling by, the streamlet flows,
  And in its plashy depths the sleek coöl trout rejoice.

Sun-loving Summer there in quiet ease
Lieth 'neath rustling Trees;—
  The priestly Oaks, that gravely spread
Their broad arms o'er the flowers below
In verdant benediction, throw
  A refluent halo round her dreamy head.

There Summer, cooled by Zephyrs of the night,
Slumbereth to human sight,
  Yet with great Nature duly runs
Her proper course, untired and true,
While Man—dull-eared, dim-sighted too—
  Scarce hears or sees Night's songs or Morning's suns!

TWOFOLD.

  Of twofold essence are our natures, all!
  The love and hate within us aye at call.
Of Passion, which is hot and cold, and so
  Of twofold species too:—
  Like clouds, whose form and hue
Alter, and interfuse, and light and shadow show.

  Methinks, sometimes, while sitting in my room
  When night hath grayed the twilight into gloom,
That, seated opposite, a Shape I see:
  Another self, in fact,
  Differing in thought and act,
But yet in sooth the same—another very Me!

My heart heaves up with love of all things, then;
But for that Counterpart, who from my ken
Hideth no secret business or desire,
I fear it,—for I spy
Ill mood in evil eye,
And salamandrine hates that writhe in glowing fire!

Even when I sleep a Double *Me* there is,
And dreams enwrap me, redolent of bliss,
That turn to angry Torments ere they pass;
Or showing in my hand
Roses,—while lo! I stand
'Mid snakes that twist among the kneedeep grass!

Or at my side some innocent prayerful child,
From whom my eyes by curious art beguiled
Wander, to fix on dismal shades beyond,—
As if I could not part
The pleasure from the smart
In any sight or scene, however foul or fond.

Then all is twofold here,—the peace and pain
So mingled with each other that in vain
Man strives to sever twinborn circumstances;
By God himself marked out
To hedge Life's path about
With wisdom, whose deep *Whys* balk human reason's glances.

But prayer, and help from Him who helpeth all
That reverently in faith upon Him call,

Can rend the evil part away, and make
The Twofold into one:—
And so, when Life is done,
All-Angel may we soar, our Heavenly rest to take!

SONNET.

Not with world-incense, whose exalting fumes
Inebriate feeble minds, would I the shrine,
Which in my heart I dedicate to you,
Surround, Belovëd! But, as purest dew
Cheereth the herb ere yet night's lagging glooms
Morning disperses, I would gladly strew
Health, hope, and faith about your steps, in sign
Of an abiding love, which only plumes
Itself upon its truth! Sweet Memory
Brings back to me your accents, as they soar'd
From your rose-lips like vocal birds in air,
What time the casket of mine ear you stored
With words of love that—like to diamonds—there
They shall be close shut up, and cared for carefully!

SONNET.

Deep in a thicket of entangling thoughts
That vex the soul with questionings, which find
No satisfactory reply, the mind
Looks vainly footwards, while the jocund notes
Of larks are in the sky. The light that floats

From Heaven alone can guide us; and the wind
(Which quenches flitting fireflies as they bind
Tree-boughs together; and the glow-worm motes
Flickering amidst the grass), shall move away
Leaf-shadows, shutting out the sun,—that so
A path may be distinguished! GOD can throw
An answering ray across each darksome doubt,
And from the thicket gently lead us out,
If we but love, and trust, and hope, and pray!

THE ELEVENTH HOUR.

The dark deep river in Her sight,
And a grave her thoughts within,
She creepeth from the crowded streets,
Loathing their human din;—
Wearily creepeth she
Where none but God can hear or see!
Where not a shadow meets
Her worn eyes, but the river deep
With dark pools in the darksome night,
And promise false of an eternal sleep!

Who sent her there? what sent her there
With madness in her brain?
The love of man to hatred turned,
That should have sooner slain
By poison, cord, or knife:—
An easier way to take sad life,

To give death, sadly earned
By too fond trust, too earnest love,
Than cruel burthenings of care
Heaped the wronged soul and bleeding heart above!

What stopped her on the dark pool's brink,
Where human eyes were none to see?
What stayed her from the plunge of dread?
Canst thou not answer me?
GOD'S tender gaze beheld—
GOD'S love—by human hate repell'd—
Could raise up prayers instead
Of dark hard thoughts; could make her know,
'Tis sin from life sin-stained to shrink,
Ere CHRIST hath washed the red soul white as snow!

THE POET AND THE VOICE.

A Poet wandered by a woodland stream,
Voicing the thoughts which made his daily dream,
Whilst joyous birds took up the mystic theme:

Or so they seemed to do—such concord bound
The soul-filled to the soul-less voice in sound;
Note blent with note, in music so profound!

"The stream flows on beneath a summer sky,
The winter clouds pass o'er it equally—
It singeth freely still, and so do I.

"It singeth on, whate'er its waters cover;
If sunshine or if shadows o'er it hover,
Its song the same—glad Music's constant lover!

"The woods, awake with melody, lift up
Their leafy hands, as holding in a cup
Rich floods of song that drip down drop by drop.

"Bird-rife the branches and song-rife the birds—
I know not what they utter, but the chords
Rouse thoughts within me that can find no words!

"And I could almost deem such harmony
Woke echoes, that within my spirit lie
Till so called forth—each chant a prophecy!

"And merry sound their lays, if I can read
The interpretation by the hopes they breed
Within a frame where youth and health exceed!"

* * * *

Oh Poet-heart! 'tis youth, 'tis health, 'tis hope
That make for thee Life's golden portals ope
To vistas bright beyond all real scope!

'Tis youth, 'tis strength, 'tis hope that give thy song
The poetry, which doth to earth belong
Only ere life hath fed, or starved, on wrong!

Ere life hath played with reptiles and with thorns
That haunt the after-thoughts with shames and scorns,
Reaped through mad nights upon repentant morns!

Oh, Poet-heart! couldst thou thus ever sing,
Joy were a real and enduring thing,
Fresh as the bud on bough or bird on wing.

But as the stream sings on, and doth not show
The ruggedness and death that lurk below,
In thy gay song may hide prophetic woe.

The jocund birds may be interpreters
Of coming wretchednes,—in lyric airs
Gaily foreboding comfortless despairs.

The very utterance of mirth may be
Mystic dissemblings of the wo, which we
Are yet to boldly brave, or basely flee!

Oh, Poet-heart, sing on! but sing on still
With a pure-thoughted mind and innocent will,
That so thy music may retain its skill!

AN EPISODE IN THE WAR-LIFE OF A SUBALTERN.

After all, it is no joke to lose oneself in an unknown country, when that country happens, moreover, to belong to our enemies, and we know not how soon the flash of an unfriendly firearm, or the glitter of a hostile steel, may lend the surrounding darkness a light that, if "dim," is by no means "religious." But I must explain to you how I became lost, before I expatiate on my experiences after the fact became realized to my senses. A soldier is generally accounted more concise and curt when he relates his adventures in writing, than when he is emboldened to recite them *viva voce*. I must therefore be forgiven if, neglecting the polished sentences of the author, *par excellence*, I tell my tale with the rough brevity that may somewhat mar the interest of the narrative, though it must furnish hints of the author's calling.

It was during the very thick of the Burmese War, in 1825, that I joined my regiment—one of the crack corps of the Madras Native Infantry, whose number my modesty prevents me from giving. I found it at Prome, whither it had preceded me some time previous, on account of my having been detained on duty at Rangoon. After the stagnant flats and rank marshy vegetation of the latter place, the swelling hills of Prome, clad with beautiful shrubs, and soaring in fantastic groups over the steep banks that bordered the glorious Irrawaddy River, burst lovelily upon my sight, so long satiated with the level landscape, or rather waterscape, about Rangoon; for I had been detained there during those fearful rain-months which convert the adjacent country into a series of meres, through whose liquid mazes—fertile in malaria—there is at times no safe passage, save by the canoe. Glad was I to leave the boat in which the greatest portion of my journey to Prome had been made, and all the discomforts of a long trajet through a country newly wrested from the enemy, to find myself once more with my brother officers, comfortably, if not luxuriously, located in a ruined Keoum, or monastery, in a lovely grove below the highest hill, afar from the contagion of unwholesome fens or thick jungle.

It was in the month of April that the unfortunate affair occurred, which led to that episode in my life which I am about to record. The Commander of the Forces, Sir Archibald Campbell, having received private information that large bodies of the Burmese had taken up a position in the woods, about twenty miles

south of Prome, issued orders for the despatch of two native regiments, the 28th and 43rd, M.N.I. on the morning of the 15th April, and in light marching order, to attack the place. From the intelligence he had obtained, it would appear that this position was not supposed to be either very extensive, very strong, or very well guarded, since it was not thought necessary to provide the attacking force with artillery, pioneers, or escalading ladders. They were, however, given to understand that two other regiments, the 22nd and 38th M.N.I., which were encamped at different places outside, would co-operate with them; but their hopes on this score were unfortunately balked. We started, en brigade, early on the morning of the 15th, the men merely taking their boat-cloaks, two days' provisions, and forty rounds of ammunition a-piece; but it was not before the following day, and after a fatiguing march through harassing jungle, and over rough or no roads, little relieved by occasional short halts, that we suddenly found ourselves in close contact with the enemy. Very differently situated were they from the position in which we had expected to find them, and so far from being few in number, that we had every reason to believe them in strong force. Not scattered about on a plain, traversed by those excavations which—like ants—they usually resorted to for defence or attack, when camping on plain ground, were the enemy, but right in front of us rose a strong breastwork, about ten feet high, thickly manned with Burmese. To our right was a tope of large trees, and no sooner had our advance party

shown itself, than from this and from the breastwork, as well as from the long grass and cane jungles to our left, a galling fire was opened upon us. There was not a man among us, from the gallant brigadier commanding, Colonel Mac Dowall, to the bugler of the light company, who did not instantly become aware of the danger of our position, and of the utter needlessness of attacking what was essentially a strong stockade, without either guns and ladders, or artillerymen and pioneers to manœuvre these necessaries. We were formed as judiciously as the unexpected nature of our case admitted of; but I know not whether it would not have been the wisest course to have retreated at once. This we did not do; and presently guns, gingals, musquetry, poured in upon us, committing the most severe havoc. A very few moments sufficed to show the power of death, and our brave commandant, Colonel Mac Dowall, fell in front of the 43rd regiment, whilst gallantly cheering his men! He died instantaneously, and then it would seem that only then, and for the first time, a feeling of desperation found its way to the hearts of the soldiers. It is not necessary to give the name of the unfortunate officer who succeeded Colonel Mac Dowall in the command of the brigade; if he erred in judgment, or failed in action, the error and the failure were afterwards sadly expiated; but it is likely that he was left in ignorance of the course his predecessor intended to pursue, and the consequences were humiliating to those whom he commanded. The orders to "cease firing" were confusedly followed up by that of "right about face," and it was with

difficulty the troops—maddened by the sight of their comrades falling around them — "like leaves in autumn"—could be induced to obey. Up to this moment, indeed, the Sepoys had behaved with coolness and intrepidity; but exasperated to frenzy by their losses, they became deaf to a sudden and unexplained order to retreat, which, once given, the giver left them to follow as best they could. It was evident in their state of excitement that they would have even attempted to scale the breastwork, had not the cool and steady judgment of their officers overruled their rash desires, and, at last, a somewhat better form of retreat was commenced; but all this time the enemy seemed to accumulate, and amongst the grass of the prairie some very fine Cassay horse made a conspicuous figure. Out of the seven officers of the 43rd regiment who left Prome, only two reached it untouched. Lieutenant R. died during the following night, and Lieutenant E. was conveyed from the heat of the fight on the shoulders of a brave native officer, who, I rejoice to say, afterwards lived to be Subidar Major of the corps. Brave Syed Futteh! let me record his name. But I am anticipating. The enemy followed us up, harassing us right and left, for several miles, during which we lost many men; our loss altogether consisted of 25 rank and file killed, and 25 wounded or missing, with one officer wounded of the 28th regiment, while that of the 43rd was still more—being 30 rank and file killed, 47 wounded, and 10 missing—with seven officers severely wounded, one of whom died. Meanwhile the regiments that had been expected to co-

operate with us had taken a course diverging from the direct route, and fallen in with another strong position of the enemy, when after a severe contest they were forced to abandon the fray; the 22nd regiment having had 90 men killed and wounded, and seven officers wounded. But leaving my own regiment to pursue its saddened way, both men and officers worn out with fatigue, and obliged to assist the wounded as best they could (for the rascally Doolie bearers had abandoned their litters early in the fight, so that we found it impossible to bring on many of our dead, and, it is to be feared, some of our wounded), I will tell you what befel myself.

The enemy had ceased to harass us, and in complete silence, mournful, and embittered against those who, albeit in ignorance, had yet sent us, as it were, against a Goliath without a sling or a stone, we were moving on, when a young grenadier of my company, endeared to me by singularly attractive manners and irreproachable conduct, and whom I had observed during the skirmishes that followed the first fire from the breastwork, in close contact with several of our assailants, more than one of whom came within range of his musket, and felt the point of his bayonet, suddenly stumbled in the path, and dropping his musket, with a sharp exclamation of pain, fell right before me. Not until then did Meer Ali confess that he had received a wound some time before; but when I stooped down to assist him, a gush of blood from his side, the first, as it would seem which had flowed from the wound, completely saturated me. The surgeon was near, his jacket was stripped off, and then

I saw at once from the expression that passed over the face of our worthy Medicus, that there was no hope. Meer Ali also saw that look, and striving to clasp my hand, he uttered one word, and instantly fell back, lifeless!—That word was "*Feroza*"—Feroza?—that means the bright, beautiful, blue turquoise stone!—True, but it is also a woman's name, and who can tell how many tears a mother, a sister, a beloved betrothed may yet shed for him! Such thoughts passed in a moment through my brain, even before I relinquished the body of my youthful favourite, over whose beautiful countenance and manly brow I was not ashamed of shedding tears. "It is of no use," cried the doctor; "the poor fellow is quite dead; don't you see the ball went clean through——" and he jabbered some learned piece of Latinity that I *believed in*, though I could not understand it. "Go on," cried I, "all of you leave me for awhile, and rejoin your corps. I'll soon overtake you."

I wished to be alone with the dead—to be alone with that which—now lifeless—had so often been near me, whilst living; and as I bent over the body, whence the blood-stream—coagulated I supposed by death—no longer flowed, a strange feeling of awe and love, and pity—nay, almost of envy—came over me. This young man, Meer Ali, had once been my servant—my page—when he was but one of the "orderly boys" of the regiment. He had been faithful, affectionate, truthful; and through a severe illness had tended me with almost feminine tenderness. His mother, the respectable widow of a native officer, was

known to me; he was her only son, and his name was down in the list of men whom I intended to recommend for promotion on the first vacancy; for, though only a subaltern, I commanded my company. As I looked at him and thought how vain were all such thoughts, deep sorrow filled my heart. I could not even protect those well-formed limbs from the beasts and the birds of the jungle, and I shuddered as I tore from the tree beneath which he was stretched branches and leaves, wherewith to form an inefficient shroud for his poor body. As I arose, I perceived an amulet of silver, which was fastened round his wrist; I took it away with me, for I knew that his mother would value it, and endeavoured to pursue the trail of the regiment. But I had lingered too long, and I soon found that all the haste I made to overtake the troops was to no purpose. I reached a spot in the woods where three roads met, and following that which appeared the most trodden, I at once took it. But, of course, I need not tell you that I did wrong, as I very soon discovered; for I had not gone a hundred yards before—gradually diminishing until it became a mere *puggrusta*, or thief-track—I found myself in the swiftly-gathering dusk of eve, on the brink of an extensive swamp in the very thick of a forest of teak-wood. I reflected for a moment; I could not be more than some six miles from Prome, and, as the setting sun was before me, I was not in exactly a wrong direction. An hour—perhaps nearly two hours—might have passed since I saw the last of the troops; I could not now overtake them,—I could but choose the likeliest path to Head Quarters,

and most certainly that path lay not through the swamp. I turned round, and fairly ran; willing to make up for lost time, and wishing to regain the point where I had been bewildered by the three roads. I had my regulation sword by my side (what a thing to use in action!) and one pistol in my waist-belt. It was loaded, and in that I looked to find my only defence, in case of danger. I was in hopes that no lurking Burmans were near, but there might be tigers and wild cats; and darkness has a singular power in creating perils, even in the safest situations. I was not long in reaching the three roads, nor had I proceeded far on the one I now selected, ere I saw a white object in my path, which proved to be a handkercheif—an officer's. This encouraged me; but the jungle was dense, letting in through its verdant interstices very little of the light of day that yet remained; nor had I gone a mile ere that little failed me. Not a sound was to be heard that denoted the vicinity of man, but the night-noises that abound in the woods were rife and threatening. Oh! a strange mystery is this same sense of hearing, which at certain moments provides us with so much unutterable enjoyment, whilst at others it overwhelms us with doubts and despairs that go nigh to madden us!

I was now stumbling at every step, knocking my head against protruding boughs, and panting with fatigue. I determined to remain where I was until the moon arose, which I knew it must do ere long, and I threw myself on a hillock, which I was not wrong in believing to be one of those abandoned

heaps of earth, the fabrication of which is due to the termites or white ants. I had long before eaten my last biscuit, and was both hungry and thirsty; but close to me flourished a fine bush of the *cassia fistula*, whose bright yellow papilionaceous clusters of bloom had turned to the long, singular-looking pods which contain the seed. Some of these are more than a foot in length, and as, when ripe, each seed is surrounded by a glutinous substance which resembles honey in taste, I refreshed my parched mouth with the sweet pulp; abstaining, however, from too freely partaking of the dulcet diet, for I knew that it was possessed of cathartic properties. A sense of stupor stole over me, dispelling all thoughts of prudential caution, and I fell asleep.

"What is it?" cried I, as I woke up, aroused by the clammy chill of some mysterious substance that seemed to be dragged over my head, and forehead, and eyes. The chill reached my very heart, as I became aware that a serpent was trailing itself slowly across the upper part of my face. I could not open my eyes, over which it was passing; but the nauseously musky odour that exhaled from its moist convolutions sickened me as I lay quite still. It was perhaps well that apprehension catalepsed me into this state of rigid inactivity, for God only knows the nature of that reptile, whether venomous or harmless; but as the last touch of its tail left my eyes free, I beheld it disappear tranquilly into a large hole, not ten inches from where I lay. And then I recollected that those gigantic ant-hills, when forsaken by their aboriginal inhabitants, form the

favourite homes of snakes, scorpions, and guanas. I started up, determined to sleep no more; and had scarcely formed the resolution before I found that not only was the moon up, but in addition to its light, faintly through the brush streamed the red glimmering of a fire, kindled at no great distance, for I could hear the crackling of the thorns of which it was composed. Listening eagerly I became aware that people were talking, and dubious as regarded the claims they might have upon my perfect confidence, I stole towards them as quietly as I could, and gained the boundaries of the thicket, near to which they had made their fire undetected.

The sight that awaited me filled me with wonder and curiosity. In an open space, free from jungle, a group consisting of four persons were busily engaged in some mysterious manipulation of a corpse—or what, at least, seemed to me to be the almost naked body of a man. Some hellish incantation, performed by the traditional witches of a melodrama, appeared to be going on; for the performers were females, and whilst one of them kept up a low muttered chant, the others applied unguents to the corpse, and tore up strips of plantain leaves, wherewith they prepared bandages. These four women—very old, very ugly, and very decrepid, their heads entirely bald, which gave them an effect which might have been ludicrous but for the accompaniments of scene and action—were arrayed in long garments of white, with yellow zones; and I recognised them, by their costume and *no* head-dress, to belong to that class of priestess attendant on the worship of Budh, which devotes

itself to the service of the monasteries. At one period there existed nunneries of virgin priestesses, but now there are only a few venerable old women who adhere to this body, and who are entitled to some portion of respect, on account of the offices they discharge, which are always those of charity and mercy. I had not long gazed ere a loud shout from one of the women announced that the result of their operations was becoming manifest; and to my surprise I saw the imaginary corpse first raise an arm, then move a leg, and presently testify every appearance of reanimated life! One of those bright lacquered drinking-cups peculiar to Ava was placed at his lips, and he drank of it freely; and in another moment, raised up in their arms, I saw the face of the man. *It was Meer Ali!*

I could restrain myself no longer. I felt that nothing was to be apprehended from those benevolent old women, and in another minute I purposely agitated the bushes in which I was ensconced, in order to apprise them of the approach of an intruder; and, whilst they started up in some dismay, yet gathering around the wounded man as if to defend him if need were, I advanced towards them with a low salaam. They no longer showed any symptoms of uneasiness, but rather testified joy at beholding a European and a soldier; and when they beheld the evident delight which poor Meer Ali endeavoured to express by faint exclamations, and extending his hand towards me, their pleasure needed no interpreter which their gestures did not supply. Their prudent and salutary treatment of my wounded friend, was quickly re-

warded by the sound and restorative slumber into which he almost immediately fell, and I saw that his wound had been bandaged up so expertly as to promise fair things for the future.

What now was to be done? I could not speak three words of Burmese, but I pronounced what I believed to be Prome, and I pointed and gesticulated like a pantomimist. One of the good old dames nodded and pointed in return, uttering the word "Phongi," which I knew meant a monk. After some conference between "the weird sisters," she departed, beckoning me to follow; and, as I imagined, making signs to assure me that Meer Ali should be safe, and that she was about to conduct me where assistance could be obtained. I had not followed her far, before, leaving the brushwood quite behind us, we came upon a fine open tract of country, across which the first trails of dawn were driving the shadows of night, lighting up the eastern skies with glowing colours, and rescuing all the scene from the dubious obscurity that so frequently creates phantoms of danger. All at once, a Keoum, or monastery, burst upon our sight, and my conductress, again repeating the word Phongi, smiled, and endeavoured to cheer me on. Great indeed was my joy to find on our arrival at the abandoned monastery—for the peaceful brotherhood had forsaken it, all but one man—that the place was in possession of a party of sepoys—the rearguard of the 22nd regiment, M.I., in charge of some doolies carrying their wounded men. From them I heard the tiding of their calamitous encounter with a large force of the enemy, stockaded strongly, in the forest, and

was delighted to ascertain that we were within a few miles of Prome.

In a short time Meer Ali was safely conveyed to the Keoum, whence our progress to camp was made without impediment. I joined my detachment a few hours after its arrival at head quarters, having been accounted a "lost sheep." But great was the quizzing which our worthy doctor underwent on account of Meer Ali, whose wound, though severe, proved no whit dangerous.

"Weel, weel, lads," said Medicus, "wha kens gin I had meddled wi the woond, if the loon had leeved till now!"

Who indeed, doctor!

Four years afterwards, there was great bustle and grand toomasha in the lines of my regiment at Ellore. There was a *shadee* (bridal) going on; the bridegroom, a young handsome Mussulman, was *Havaldar* Meer Ali; the name of the bride was Feroza.

WARNINGS.

Ye mystic Sighs, which are the winds that fling
  Down from Hope's tree the fruitage of the heart—
Unconscious Tears, which from some dim source spring,
  By Nature set mysteriously apart
    Within my being,—ye are warnings twain
    Of some quick-coming pain!

Before the storm, nay! ere the ominous wind
Doth more than kiss the aspen's shivering leaves,
Trees 'gin to quake, and birds upon them find
A fear—which haunts the spider as it weaves
Its web, abandoned in the panic cast
By the phenomenal blast!

The earthquake warns *them*;—are Men, only, blind
Or deaf, since birds and beasts feel that which tells
Of Nature's coming pang? Hath not each mind
A consciousness 'gainst peril that rebels?
The very seas, the very rivers show
A change before the throe!

Oh! never unannounced do dangers come!
Some influence strange the caution vaguely speaks;
Tears dim and sickening—the sough and hum
Of visionary wings—tolled peals that break
From viewless bells—the conquering sigh, or tear,
Warn us of evil near!

Tell me not, then, 'tis Superstition all!
The forms and shows of truth no sneer can turn
To dubious shadows. On the mental Wall
A mystic Hand in words that flash and burn
Traces the characters that hint of fear—
But where's the interpreter?

We fain would read the minds of other men,
Yet dare not honestly expose our own;
We try to shake their faith in fears that, when
They are fulfilled, compel us to atone
For unbelief by tears, that plainly show
The fountain whence they flow!

LOOKING FOR SPRING.

A lingering damp within the air
  Chilled all the murky town,
As I strode forth to scent the earth
  In dingle or on down—
In any place where I could trace
  No shade of winter's frown.

I walked into the fields, still bare,
  Though the accustomed plough
Had done its early duty there—
  Then up a hill did go,
Till there I stood within a wood
  Beneath the broad day's glow.

'Twas Spring, and yet I saw few signs
  Of any vernal sheen:
The Ivy, round bare things that twines
  Its natural growth of green,
I saw alone on tree and stone
  To vivify the scene.

"And yet it is the Spring," I said,
  "For Winter, yesterday
Its filigree of frost that spread
  O'er path and plant, away
The sun and wind have swept. I find
  Soft dews where snowdrifts lay.

"And there its sulphur-tinted flowers
  One venturous Primrose shows;
And hark! rejoice! it is the voice

Of Spring that comes and goes
From brier to bush! the speckled Thrush
Sings where yon hawthorn grows!"

It is the Spring! rich descants ring
That wake within my mind
Hopes almost dead: despair hath fled,
To leave no sting behind:—
Hail; speckled thrush! hail, hawthorn bush!
Hail, sunny vernal wind!

The first song of the infant Spring
Is thine, thou merry thrush!
The first bud to thy branches cling,
Thou gentle hawthorn bush!
To see leaves sprout and hear birds shout,
Glad thoughts within me gush!

MARCH FLOWERS.

Come, with the winds, young March! come, for thou art
The pith and marrow of the Spring; thy breath,
Though rude, yet wins fair Flora's earliest wreath
To crown thee for a glory! Violets start
From dark green leaves to fling rich scents around:
The pale Anemone, that to its heart
Welcomes thy roughest kiss with passion, waves
Its star-shaped blossoms for thee; and the ground
Is bright with Cranesbills, crimson, pink, and blue!
With glossy leaves the yellow Celandine
Reveals its gold to thee; and from their graves,

(Like Phœnixes) with salvers sweet of smell,
Primroses sulphur-coloured rise anew!—
Fragrant Narcissi; snowy white, are thine,
And Almond blossoms, that like blushes dwell
On boughs, all bathed at morn with wholesome dew:—
Come, with thy winds, young March! and with thee bring
Green branches, where the merry birds may sing!

SONNET.

TO A FRIEND WHO LAMENTED HER NUMEROUS FAULTS.

Shed thou no tears because thou art of earth!
Its imperfections make thee kindred clay
With him, across whose stern and sterile way
Ev'n *thou* hast scattered flowers of priceless worth!
The richest gem—the Diamond—hath its birth
Where darkness dwells, and where cold wormy things
Are bred and revel; and the clearest springs
Through loamy channels pass ere they gush forth
To don external life in beauty. Thou
Less dear wert to me if in perfectness
Thy nature so surpassëd mine that I
Dared not to scan the mirror of thy brow,
Lest the free sympathy which there doth bless
My human sight I could not then espy!

A REMINISCENCE OF THE BURMESE WAR.

On the 23rd of January, 1826, I was encamped with my regiment, then on its advance with the grand army towards Umerapoora, the capital of the Burmese territories. On that day the orderly books contained the following address:—"Major-General Sir Archibald Campbell has to intimate to the army that a treaty of peace was this day concluded and signed by the British and Burmese Commissioners, highly advantageous to the British interest. He takes this opportunity of congratulating them on this event, which is entirely to be ascribed to their gallantry in the field, and their persevering good conduct in every situation during the arduous contest. The Commander of the forces, in announcing the termination of the war, recommends that no relaxation shall take place in the vigilance which has marked their progress so far!"—It was well that our brave and sagacious General terminated his dashing order, that seemed to be written on an olive leaf with a quill from the quiver of Bellona, with so prudent a caution; for, as after events proved, the enemy were never less bent upon pacific measures than when endeavouring to impress us with the conviction of their amicable intentions. Indeed, on the very next day, I had an interview with Sir Archibald Campbell, in which he expressed his opinion to be that the Burmese Commissioners were systematically employing all 'sorts of trickery to hoax us; "and

(said he) I think that no dependence can be placed on a people the whole course of whose dealings with us has been marked by a crooked policy, that although it harasses us and delays our movements now, must eventually defeat their cherished purposes." The result confirmed the General's suspicions.

Several days passed; and at last that day on which the treaty, signed by the Emperor, ought to have arrived from Umerapoora, arrived, and followed its predecessors, unmarked by any event likely to diminish our doubts of Burman sincerity. We were encamped at Patanagoh, while at Malown, on the opposite side of the Irawaddy River, the enemy were observed busily strengthening their defences, throwing up breastworks, &c. The cautions of Sir A. Campbell may have been partially disregarded in our camp; for an officer of H. M. 13th Light Infantry, when wandering in the brushwood near Patanagoh, with his fowling-piece, had disappeared, having been surprised and carried off by a band of lurking Burmans; he was conveyed by them to Umerapoora, where Dr. Sandford, and Lieut. Bennett, of the Royal Regiment, made prisoners on a former occasion, were retained in close confinement with the Rev. Mr. Judson, his celebrated and amiable wife, and a few others. On the 18th January, no treaty having yet made its appearance, a conference took place between the opposing arms, when the fulfilment of their engagements was demanded of the Burmese by the General—namely, the delivery up to us of their stockade at Malown, or the promised treaty,

sanctioned by the Imperial Signet. Delay continuing to be their policy, the Burmese begged for more time; which, being refused, and they in turn refusing to deliver up the place, drew upon them a warning to expect a renewal of hostilities on the succeeding day. A fine attacking force was accordingly held in readiness, consisting of H.M. 13th and 38th Regiments, with the 18th Madras N.I., and the flank companies of H.M. 47th and 87th Regiments, 28th and 43rd M.N.I. Up to this date the opposing armies had remained on the best possible terms with each other; frequent visits were paid to our camp by their principal chiefs, one and all of them seeming anxious that the good understanding betwixt us should continue unbroken; but now the most superficial observer might have perceived the change that had been worked "over the water," where all seemed motion and preparation. And when at last our meditated renewal of hostilities was published, their movements could be compared to nothing but the stir and bustle amongst a rudely disturbed nest of ants, whose preparations, by the by, are too noiseless to justify the simile, for all was clang and clamour at Malown.

And lo! at length, about eleven o'clock, A.M., our batteries, ranged on the steep banks of that beautiful river, which now, like the mysterious influence which divides life from death, separated the contending forces, and fronting their very extensive and strongly stockaded position, opened in gallant style upon them. A few shots were returned, after which all was silence amongst the enemy, who apparently delayed their grand *coup* until such time as our storming party ap-

proached them. For this purpose, the force I have before detailed embarked about half-past twelve o'clock, in three divisions of boats: our batteries in the interim making a fine inspiriting *row*—shells and rockets plying brilliantly and well. A more gallant sight than our advance I cannot well imagine; it would have made a fine picture. On our nearing the stockade, the regnant stillness there was interrupted by a heavy but ill-directed fire upon us, not long to endure! Minding it but as little as the schoolboy minds the thorn hedge he is determined to overleap, we dashed on and landed, prepared to encounter a galling fire and a perilous defence. But we were literally disappointed; for *they* took to their wisest plan of running away, and *we* took Malown! It was in truth the shortest affair of the war, for they fled, abandoning their guns, of which there were about forty; and leaving their dead and wounded, amounting to about 150, whilst our loss was still less, but one man killed and twelve wounded. A very considerable booty was captured, in hard cash not less than 30,000 rupees worth of *tickals*, and about sixty horses, or rather ponies. But the cream of the jest was, that among the documents found, *there* snugly coiled up lay the identical treaty, prepared by the joint Commissioners, in its primitive state. It had evidently never been sent to the Emperor, and thus it presented itself to us, the *ne plus ultra* of Burman deceit!

We were sitting at our ill-supplied mess breakfast-table a few days after this affair of Malown, when the adjutant entered. "You are ordered on a reconnoitring

party in advance," said he, addressing me; "you are to proceed forthwith in command of two companies to a village called Mehglah, about ten miles hence, where it is reported that a body of the enemy, in charge of a considerable quantity of treasure, are loitering until the British troops have left Patanagoh, when it is their intention to occupy this post, reinforced by the runaways from Malown, who are lurking in the woods beyond the river. Your instructions are to put them to flight, if, as is said, they are few in number, and the place assailable; on the other hand, should you find they are in great force, or have departed, you are directed to retire to Meengown, about four miles to your left, and on the banks of the river, where you will join a regiment, forming the advance of the army, and where the gunboats are to assemble this afternoon."

"What then is the force at Mehglah supposed to amount to."

"Not a hundred men; the object is to seize their treasure, and to rescue from their hands any of our troops who may be, as is suspected, in their power."

"Who accompany me?"

"We can only spare you Franklin and Brand."

I was satisfied; for of all my juniors young Harry Brand was my favourite. He was a fine manly boy of eighteen, full of fair promise, and distinguished by a calm stedfast disposition that secured him from the many trifling annoyances which are unsparingly reserved for the race of "Griffins" to whom he still belonged, for he had not been twelve months in India. He was besides of a generous and frank

nature, and though quiet and undemonstrative, imbued with those sentiments which the frivolous are inclined to taunt as being "romantic," though in fact they are scarcely ever wanting in high and noble characters. Brand had soon discovered that there was sympathy between us, in more points than one; and he quickly learnt to confide in me all those little home and heart-secrets which fill the bosoms of the young and sensitive—secrets which I by no means despised nor disregarded, although being his senior by some six or eight years, I better knew how to conceal sentiments that have, it may be, too brief a hold on the principles of mankind. How we loved, after the long day's weary march, to lay our mats side by side under the shade of some leafy tree, where apart from the others we could talk of home, of our dear ones there, and of our hopes of rejoining them hereafter, when, oh! faultless ambition of youth! with laurels round our brows, we could tell them how thoughts of them cheered us amidst famine, disease, and war, making even our mess of coarse rice and saltfish pleasant to the taste, and our drink of bad water and worse arrack rich with the aroma of regal wines! Sometimes, too, Harry would give me rapid pencil-sketches of beloved scenes near his native Taunton, for he was a clever artist; and sometime I would read to him certain sonnets and elegies, submitted to none but him, for I indulged myself in a faint belief of my poetic capabilities. Well do I recollect the sweet and gentle countenance which, pencilled on a card, he would show me as delineating a charming Emily, whilst I in turn would

treat him to word-pictures of a no less fascinating Alice! But Harry's grand contentment lay in a small golden circlet—a plain ring containing a lock of the fair Emily's chesnut hair, which he constantly wore on his little finger, which indeed it fitted so closely that it was not easily to be severed from it.

But to return. Not many minutes had passed ere we were ready, and with a Burman guide led between two privates preceding us, gaily defiled through the glady environs of Patanagoh. Our march was impeded by no obstacle, varied by no adventure; and lying through a country, whence the inhabitants had fled from advancing foe and aggressive friend, presented no other features than that of deserted hamlets devastated or neglected fields, and a few forsaken *keoums*, or monasteries. When there, the guide announced our close proximity to the suspected village, and we divided our little party in order to come upon it right and left, and all at once perceived there was no concealing jungle around it, no signs of stockade or excavation near it; we were sensible of a degree of disappointment not at all to be wondered at. A close examination proved the place to be uninhabited; a poor decrepid man, literally unable to help himself to the draught of water and morsel of cold rice which had been placed near him in a wretched hovel, was the only creature to be seen. We added to the dying creature's comforts, and from his few faltering words gleaned the apparently truthful information that no such force as had been reported had ever passed through Mehglah, the inhabitants of which had retreated inland, plundered and despoiled by the Burmese

troops who had retired from Prome on the capture of that place. He lay there, he said, waiting for death, and there was hardly a chance that he could again look upon the face of man! The tranquil apathy with which the old man saw us depart suggested strange emotions; nor are such suggestings afforded in vain. They teach the enlightened Christian a lesson derived even from the darkness of Paganism, and whisper of the higher and holier serenity which is imparted to his last moments by that Divine assurance of immortality which has a more stable foundation than is obtainable from the arid tenets of Boodh or Bramha!

We had nothing to do now, but to get to Meengown, a short distance off, where we might expect to find the advance guard of the army with the pioneers ashore, and the gun boats afloat. We had plenty of time to do it in, and as the day was at its strongest sun-heat, we determined to halt for a few hours; and the immediate neighbourhood of Mehglah being filthy and disagreeable, we made for a deserted *keoum*, which the guide pointed out to us at a few stone-throws from the village, and on the direct route to Meengown. It stood on a rising ground, that commanded a view of the river, whilst a few clumps of trees around it promised shelter from the scorching rays of the sun; in the interior—not negligent of such precautions as behove all detached parties in an enemy's country—some of us might escape from the irritating dust, which a high hot wind was now driving in our faces, every now and then whirling up into the sky in those columnar masses which, like move-

able pillars of some strange substance, form so striking a feature in the sultry dry-wind season of Oriental countries. Without any intention of making a pun, I have used the word "striking." Now, any one who has visited the East will corroborate the fact as regards the aggressive power possessed by those same perambulating obelisks of dust; which, originating no one can tell how, ascends in a swirl from the earth, over which careering in capricious course, it sweeps up everything that comes in its way, from a leaf to a lizard, until all at once with a dying *sough*, it subsides, as it arose, in mystery; dispersing, Heaven and the scientific only know how, for even as you mark its progress, rising from the ground till it soars up many feet above it, it breaks suddenly away in the air, whilst "function is smothered in surmise" at its singular origin and end. The natives of Malabar call it *kaatoopeeshash*, the wind-demon; and I myself have seen it unroof the thatched bungalow of a brother subaltern in the twinkling of an eye; whilst on another occasion it made free with the whole paraphernalia of a field officer, who was preparing for parade, and whose coat, sash, and belt were suspended on a screen *outside* his verandah, where he was dressing, when lo! enter the Peeshash, and wheeling round the compound, comes upon the screen, whence instantly ravishing its military treasures, it carries them several furlongs up into the air, letting them descend on a huge tamarind tree on the parade, to the great admiration of all beholders!

As we approached the keoun, one of those things rose directly behind us, and had we stood upon "the

order of our going," marching in formal drill style, I have not a doubt but that it would have levelled some of us, and severed the ranks as completely as if we had been so much chaff or straw. But we speedily wheeled right and left to let it pass lovingly, and well it was no Burmans were by to attack us then, for our eyes were blinded with that pungent powder, which poor L. E. L. called, "mud in high spirits."

Our first object was to examine the keoum, which indeed we found to be as thorough a vacuum as was desirable. Sentries were posted, arms were piled, and the men permitted to rest. Their provisions of parched *dāl* (a sort of pea), rice, sugar, and dates, required no cooking; and a pretty fountain of pure water supplied us with drink. They had saltfish too, and none was deficient in tobacco in some shape, whilst many contented themselves with a chew of betel. My faithful Madras servant, Malliapa (let me record his name, for during a space of eighteen years he served me with an affectionate fidelity that might oftener be found in his race if due justice was done to it), had brought some cold meats, biscuit, and eau-de-vie; and Franklin and Brand were similarly attended and supplied; so that before many minutes were over, we were all snugly taking our ease, as best we could, not forgetting that in the want of carpets and sofas to repose on, we should be thankful that we possessed mats, a boat-cloak or two, and the clean bamboo flooring of the keoum. Brand and I perambulated the large deserted place in a vain search for adventures; we found nothing but here a heap of grain, there a mass of yams, and here and there an

old box, an aged book, with leaves of palm-tree leaf, and binding of lacquered wood, sometimes gold-illumined, on opening which our eyes rested on picturesque, mediværal-looking characters, that were to us veritable mysteries. As we entered one little chamber, we perceived one of those huge Burmese cats, without a tail, which are peculiar to the country. The poor creature, albeit unused to white men, crept coaxingly towards me, rubbing its bright furry coat against my side, and mewing piteously, as if it demanded quarter. It had not a famished appearance by any means, but it nevertheless partook of the water which Brand brought it, preferring however the portion of saltfish he had obtained for it from my orderly. Issuing strong injunctions against all caticide, we kept the playful and very tame animal with us until it was time to move; and having rested a couple of hours, were again contending against unabated wind and undiminished dust.

How trite it is to assert the trivial origin of tremendous effects! The acorn that produces the oak—the bush-hidden source of the wide-showing river—the little thin-skinned egg that ushers viperdom and venom to the world! As we were slowly jogging on, my *Maytee* (servant), who happened to be near Brand and myself, suddenly said,

"Dat poor cat, sar! Why master not bring him?"

"Well, I wish I had," said Brand; "it will perish there, poor thing!"

"Nonsense," cried I; "do you imagine that it has no private resources, no granary of mice, no aviary of sparrows, no secret larder sacred to cathood, and well stored with salted minnows?"

"Nevertheless I wish I had taken it," said he. "Do you know that it was very like Emily's cat, only to be sure, *that* had a tail."

"Well, then, why not run back for it?" said I, like a fool as I was, for after all, the cat might prove an. encumbrance. "We can mark time, or spend time in any other military manner for ten minutes, which will suffice to take you to the keoum and back again, if you make haste."

Off he ran, for his young limbs were supple and untired; but he had scarcely gone ere I repented having suggested such a foolish proceeding. The men, however, were pleased, laughing heartily, and liking him all the better for his brute-benevolence; for our much-maligned and far from properly appreciated Sepoys are a humane race, among whom one rarely sees the practice of such barbarities as are so frequently perpetrated by us white men on inoffensive animals. Nevertheless a strange feeling of dissatisfaction with myself came over me; there could be no danger—certainly not. We knew there were no bodies of the enemy near us, for the adjacent country was clear of brush, and all about the keoum was within scope of our vision.

"Well, I wish I had not let him go," said I, suddenly halting the men and getting anxious, for more than ten minutes had expired, and we were now about half a quarter of a mile from the keoum. He had disappeared into the building some time before, and the Sepoys were joking about Braud Sahib and the beautiful *billee* (cat) which would be our only *loot* (booty) after our *dowr* (expedition in search of an enemy).

"*Soonno, Sahib!* Hear, Sir," said the native officer. It was a shot! the report of a pistol—Brand's pistol!

"Ha, ha, ha," cried Franklin, "he has shot the cat." Why did I shudder? What is that? A cry?—the shrill cry of a bird—for the wind would prevent us from hearing any sounds that came from the keoum. Another moment and we were proceeding at a quick pace towards the building. After all, as we drew near, I felt ashamed of my apprehensions; his delay might have been occasioned by some mere trifle; he might have slipped or fallen through some crevice in those ricketty bamboo floorings; the pistol may have been discharged at a snake. However, here we were. I ordered the men to extend round the keoum, in case of treachery; and taking with me about twenty, ascended the steps that led to the great hall. I had not far to go. On the very threshold, tied by cords to the bamboo pillar that formed part of the doorway, lay Brand, *dead*—I thought so; for he lay quite still upon his back, his cap had fallen off, blood clotted his hair and stained his brow, his eyes were closed, and his hands—Ah! —one of them is still bleeding, and on closer inspection I beheld with amazed horror, that it had been deprived of the fourth finger! "He has shot it off," thought I. No such thing. No gunshot wound ever bore this appearance; besides, the pistol is gone! The little finger was cut off as cleanly as if by the amputating knife of a surgeon, and on the other there was no ring!

Harry Brand was not meanwhile neglected, though orders for a strict search of the building were imme-

diately issued. The perpetrator of the deed could not be distant, unless some secret subterranean passage, leading from the kcoum, had conveyed him away. By and by the deep swoon that held my friend, as by a chain, began to pass away: there was a deep cut, as from a blow given by some blunt instrument, on his head. We washed away the blood, which beginning again to ooze forth, we stopped as best we could with burnt rag. We gave him some brandy in water, and then he spoke, complaining of heavy sickness. We bandaged up the finger with light ligatures; for it did not bleed, and made haste to convey him outside the unlucky building. Time had passed, and a thorough but vain search was made, for no human being was discovered; so that we unanimously agreed that concealed passages underground must be in existence, which we should but lose time in endeavouring to find. Harry Brand declared he could walk between myself and Franklin, but he was still faint and sick.

"I care not for my finger," said he, "but Emily's ring!"

As we once more departed from the monastery, the loud curses of the Sepoys and then a huzza of vengeance, aroused us. "*Dekho, dekho, Sahiban!* Behold, Gentlemen, may the murderer and his wizard cat burn!" And lo! in their disappointed rage they had set fire to the edifice, which was soon enveloped in flames. A glorious sight it made, as we strode from it, in the open and bare country, the fiery element streaming from point to point, and shining through the green scattered groups of trees that stood

about, like millions on millions of red, hissing, gigantic serpents.

Harry's story was brief enough. He could not find the cat where he had left it, and descended to the little cell where first we had seen it, but it was not there; and having spent some time in a vain search, he was retracing his steps. Just as he was about leaving the keoum, he perceived a dark recess in a corner, and when stooping down to inspect it, the sound of footsteps fell on his ears. He suspected nothing more than that one of us had followed him, until he saw two Burmese spring from behind a pillar, and then he attempted to rise from the half-kneeling position in which he was; but as they advanced threateningly towards him, he presented his pistol and fired it at the very moment when he fell, levelled by a blow from the club which one of them carried. Without a word they bound him, and tried to wrench the ring from his finger in vain. He was then sensible of a keen pain in his hand, and sank into insensibility. We could not but wonder that they had left him alive; doubtless in their hurry and fear of surprise, they cared not so that they escaped, whether he died at once, or lay there to perish. They might have contemplated, too, the possibility or our returning in search of him, and retreated with all speed to their mysterious hiding-place, taking with them finger, ring, and pistol.

We reached Meengown before the sudden twilight of Ava had darkened into night; and an agreeable surprise awaited us in the sight of our own regiment, sent to cover the pioneers, as advanced guard. The

services of our worthy Scotch surgeon were soon called upon, and his bulletin was not of a startling nature. Harry Brand's head was by no means of a perilous softness, nor were his hurts dangerous; though it must be confessed that the somewhat inglorious loss of his finger inflicted no inconsiderable wound upon his pride. "Oh, Rob," whispered he, as he swallowed a composing draught administered to him by old MacD——, "Oh, Rob! how can I ever tell Emily that I lost her ring in a—*cat-hunt?*"

Four days thereafter we were some thirty miles beyond Meengown, Brand being, all but his digit, as well as ever. It was again a day of hot wind, and we were sitting, after our rough dinner, beneath the shade of a huge tree, round which we had placed the canvas walls of a tent, in order to exclude as much of the dust as was possible. It was evening, and we were discussing the probable issue of the next day's march, when we heard the clatter of horsemen, and made our exit from the temporary mess-house supplied by tree and tent, to see what was going on. It was a party of troopers belonging to the Governor-General's body-guard, which had gone on a reconnoitring excursion, during which they had surprised a body of the enemy's infantry, amounting to about 400, which they gallantly charged, broke, and routed, sabreing nearly one fourth of the force opposed to them. As they drew near we saw that they retained about a dozen prisoners; and they were not many paces from us, when suddenly up whirled one of our old puzzlers, a *peeshash*, right in front of them, as if determined to bar their progress. The horses, nearly

blinded, swerved right and left to avoid the dust; while one of the captives, taking advantage of the momentary confusion, dashed away, slap into the very centre of the whirlwind! Bold as the movement was, it failed of success; for the *peeshash*, now increased in volume and strength, fairly lifting the wretch off his feet, and again levelling him with the earth, passed on, carrying with it the Burman's turban, and advancing towards where we stood. We were ready to make a start from the dusty encounter, when all at once the impetus that urged it on became expended, and widening into a weak circumference, it gave forth its final gust, depositing the turban almost at Harry Brand's feet.

"A treasure, Harry," cried our sturdy old Major: "at all events something tangible, which is more than can be said for that spectral cat at Mehglah, which the Sepoys swear was no other than one of the witches of Ava, and not perceptible to touch *outside* the keoum."

Harry Brand did not seem in the least disposed to inspect the dirty-looking head-gear of the prisoner, who was already conveyed away by the troopers. But Malliapah, my servant, with more curiosity and less fastidiousness, picking it up, suddenly exclaimed, "Oh, Sahib! what is this?—here one jewel! Oh, Sahib! see, Mr. Brand's *ring!*"

In fact, there it glittered in pure gold and bright hair, Harry Brand's ring—Emily's ring—tacked into the inner fold of the Burman's turban, amongst a mass of tobacco leaves! On close inspection a few blood-marks were visible on the golden circle, which

suggested to Malliapah the possibility that the remaining interstices of the turban might conceal Brand Sahib's finger; but we laughed as he shook his head, saying—"No, Sar, that dam teef make cat eat 'm!"

Great was Harry's delight—great the general astonishment; and on the following day the Burman confessed that he and his comrade, hidden, as we surmised, in an underground passage where provision were stored up by the Phongis (or monks), had watched our departure and Harry's return, and seeing him intent on searching for something, made up their minds to attack him and despoil him of pistol and ring. They seized him, bound him, and unable otherwise to deprive him of the ring, with one of those razor-sharp *daks*, or wood-knives which every Burman carries in his belt, they severed the finger from his hand, nor would have spared his life but that the sounds of the returning detachment terrified them into instant flight. Safe in their retreat, they were, however, nearly stifled there ere long. The burning edifice compelled them to abandon their concealment, which they left, expecting to fall into the hands of the avenging English. But they were for the time safe; we had moved off, and destiny reserved the restoration of Harry Brand's ring to another day—that of their capture.

My friend is now a general officer. I saw him the other day at the Oriental Club. "Rob," said he, "my wife wishes you to dine with us next Monday. It is the anniversary of our marriage, and *Emily* has

never yet complained of the loss of my finger—seeing that I still preserve her ring!"

And Alice?—oh, Alice! Yes, reader, Alice married one day, and died some years ago of her third set of twins. But I never saw her again, and for the life of me I cannot remember the colour of her eyes.

BY THE SEA.

When tired of towns, and pining sore
For change to healthier ground,
Thou turn'st from crowds,—still at the core
Feeling thy heart's worst wound—
When thou hast knocked at every door,
Yet no admittance found:
At every door where Pleasure in
Glides, with a sunny grace,
But which thine own bale barreth up
From thee—then seek a place
Where gates of stone and brass are none
To frown thee in the face!

The woods have walks, where thou may'st find
A balm to salve thy grief;
And in and out where waters wind,
Are sources of relief,
In which, if thou wilt bathe thy mind,
Thou'lt have no comfort brief,
But peace, that falleth like the dew!
For everything that shows
God's sunshine speaketh marvels true
Of mercy and repose,
And joy, in rural scenes, beyond
All that the loud world knows.

Yet more than wood or woodland rill
Can give of keen delight,
We glean from ocean-margins, till
The spirit—at the sight
Of all its range of changeful change—
Becometh, like it, bright!
Bright when the sunlight on it falls,
Or grave and grand when dark
The shadowy night lets down its pall
Upon each human ark;
And every surge seems but to urge
Extinction of life's spark!

A change, an always active change,
An everness of grace,
Of grace and grandeur, takes its range
Over the Ocean's face:
As in a book for thoughts men look,
Thoughts in it we can trace!
A thought to turn us from ourselves
And all our petty cares—
A thought to move the spirit's love
To God and God's affairs,—
And thereby give to all that live
The sympathy that spares——

That spares our Brother-man from blame,
And pities him when o'er
His nature come such clouds of shame
As menaced *us* before;
God only can the sea-swell tame,
The mental peace restore!
Look on the Ocean then and feel

Its turmoil and its calm
Arouse or tranquillize thy mind—
A stimulant or balm;
A thundertone to make thee think,
Or gently soothing psalm!

The Sea! the Sea magnificent,
On which we love to pore
As if it were one vast extent
Of sage but secret lore,
Which though upon the lesson bent
Perplexes more and more!
Look down into its depths, where life
Of such strange shapes is seen
That he who thinks that human strife
On earth hath only been,
Will turn again to landward plain
And own it more serene!

Life in each fish and finny creature
That revels in the flood;
Life in each tangled weed, by nature
Formed for a curious brood;
Life in each shell of varied feature,
With many a tint imbued;
The spars that glitter up from chasms
Where zoophytes abound;
The shells, flung out from darksome pools,
To shine on sunstruck ground;
The plants that grow deep down below,
Whence comes a solemn sound:—

Those spars, shells, plants, have each and all
A God-given life within,
And solemn thoughts in thickness fall
Upon my spirit, when
I think on Man's superior claim
To grace, with all his sin!
But mysteries hide in Heavenly love
As in the dark deep wave;
And all we know, or need to know
Of life and of the grave,
Is that God gave to Man a soul
For His own Son to save!

Nor without object, gifted He
With life those groups, that grow
Like woodlands in the quaint old sea,
Whose every bud and bough
Teems with existence; why or how,
We cannot guess or know.
Enough to know that they, like us,
Were formed by Power Divine;
Enough to know that weal and woe,
That darkness and sunshine,
Have each their time of reign below,
To end when he makes sign!*

* Part of this was written for "Chapters on the Common Things of the Seaside," by Anne Pratt.

ONE OF LIFE'S RIDDLES.

Among the riddles of this sorry life
Is one which he who fathoms well may laugh
In scorn of all the rest; 'tis this—"Who quaffs
Most freely of pain's draught—Earth's wells of strife,
Are most beloved of Him, who strikes the knife
Of sorrow into human sides, and off
Joy's tree plucks leaf and fruit!"—A scoff
This may not be! yet sometimes doubt is rife
Within me, as I vainly try to trace
In ill a certain good,—from feeble root
A strengthful bough,—from impure source a rill
Of wholesome drink:—But wond'rous is God's skill!
As pricking of the fig doth ripe the fruit,
So may the heart-wound hasten spiritual grace!

A DIRGE.

"The patient little worm, that quietly weaves
Thy silken scarf from fresh green mulberry leaves,
Hath moved to meet the breath of morn,
And looks to thee for food new shorn:—
Ope, eyes! beneath your shadow of dark eaves!

"Ope, eyes! which first into my soul did throw
That javelin, love—whose touch brings bliss or woe!
List, ears! to whose recesses first
My heart breathed out its utter thirst:
Rise, gracious limbs! Lo, morning's roses blow!

"Dawn snows white blossoms from green boughs—
Dawn-birds are singing out their fresh love-vows—
Dawn from the river tempts to rise
The leaping trout; nor shall thine eyes,
Like cloud-hid stars, shelter 'neath dusky brows!"

Lover! loud lover, cease! a cruel guest
Hath visited thy faithful turtle's nest!
She sleepeth well, but shall not wake
To any music thou canst make:
She slumbereth so, life cannot mar her rest!

The guest, that comes but once to every one,
Hath sealed her eyes and ears. For her have spun
Her gentle pets their last silk webs:
For her Earth gapes—for thee Hope ebbs
Darkly away, 'neath the grave-viewing sun!

"Thou fool! she is not dead! she cannot die—
'Tis we are mortal! Up beyond the sky,
She waits for me; bide we our hour,
Bending to Him, whose gracious power
Gives life and love and immortality!"

THE WHITE FEATHER.

The attack and capture of Malown were speedily followed up by the advance of the army under Sir Archibald Campbell into the territories of the enemy, nor was it long before a manifesto was issued to us, of which the ensuing is a copy:—

"*Head-Quarters, Pagam-Mew, 9th February*, 1826.

"GENERAL ORDERS.

"Providence has once more blessed with success the British arms in this country, and in the decisive defeat of the imposing force posted under and within the walls of Pagam-mew, the Major-General recognises a fresh display of the military virtues which have characterised his troops from the commencement of the war. Early in the day the enemy, departing from the cautious system of defence behind field-works and entrenchments, which form his usual device of war, and relying on his great numerical superiority ventured on a succession of bold manœuvres on the flanks and in the fronts of the British columns. This false confidence has been rebuked by a reverse, severe, signal, and disastrous. His troops of either arm were repulsed at every point, and his masses driven in confusion within the city! The storm of Pagam-mew, which followed, exhibited the same features of intrepidity and self-devotion. The frequency of these spirited acts of soldiership on the part of his troops, renders it difficult for the Major-General to vary the terms of his praise; but he offers to every officer and soldier engaged this day, the tribute of his thanks, at once with the affection of a commander and the cordiality of a comrade."

Now, the orders of Sir Archibald Campbell, emanating from him even if adorned in the emanation by the coruscations of his "official animalculi," have been somewhat roughly criticised, their gist questioned, and their candour canvassed. For my own part I was a sincere admirer of the *man*—respected him as a wise and cautious *leader*—trusted him as a brave and gallant *General*—and (for I had reason to know it) believed him to be singularly free from all feelings of arrogant assumption or underhand

dealing. He retained no sycophants near his—*umbrella*; for that, in truth, was his chief mark of distinction in camp. He despised the petty martinetism of commanding officers who had not one-sixth part of his real claims to dignity; and with a delicacy and tact, which prevented him from intermeddling with the interior economy of the officers commanding regiments under his sway, and which did him honour, he yet made it evident that duty must be done, orders obeyed, and discipline strictly maintained. The above G. O. is, it is true, sufficiently florid and complimentary; but the fact was, that Pagam-mew was known to be the last stand of the Birman's position; and its seizure, gallantly defended as it was, though an event to be counted upon, nevertheless was of sufficient importance, as the crowning act of the war, to render a little extra eulogy, if superfluous, still welcome to the many.

In the action, 40 pieces of artillery and 100 jingals fell into our hands, the enemy losing 500 killed—many of them being drowned in attempting to escape by swimming across the Irawaddi, which swept broad and deep past one side of the city. On our side the loss was extremely small, nor did it count an officer killed or wounded.

We had found the tract of country from Malown to Pagam-mew—a distance of 136 miles—more varied than on our route to the former place from Prome; and the houses and pagodas, in the deserted towns and villages through which we passed, were of a superior construction; but nothing could equal the barren wildness of a spot called Wehmahzoop, where,

on the very edge of a steep and rocky precipice, the troops were with difficulty encamped. The approach to this singular and fantastic place, which is well worthy of an artist's pencil, led through a series of romantic ravines that appeared part of some vast volcanic formation; and so intricate were those passes, so self-protected by position, that had the enemy retained them, our defeat must have been almost certain, that is to say, provided they had courage and guns sufficient to withstand and repel the British force. When I mention the fact, that, as officer commanding the rear-guard of the army during a short march of six miles, I was occupied for twelve hours in bringing up the rear—the baggage, disabled cattle, sick and wounded, artillery *hors de combat*, &c., the reader may guess, but can scarcely realise the difficulties of the roadless route. Scarcely a step that led not up a precipice or down a crag, whilst the terrible sufferings of the poor overloaded bullocks — many of which had to be abandoned amidst sterility to perish of pain, hunger, and thirst —filled me with emotions of the most unpleasant nature. It was not, however, till we were within four miles of Pagam-mew that we came upon the outposts of the foe, and here we perceived that he was prepared to dispute the ground with us in the open field, contrary to his usual policy. Considerable judgment marked the disposition of the Burmese force; and their General, taking advantage of the tract of thorny jungle through which the latter part of our advance had been made, and ignorant of reinforcements which had joined our leading division in

the night, drew up his army in the form of a crescent, both its flanks being advanced, and the main road running directly through its centre, thinking that we must advance by it till opposed in front, when the wings would close in, to attack us on both flanks and on the rear. But our progress was conducted with such consummate skill that the object of his manœuvre was detected, and both his flanks assailed instantly. H.M. 13th Light Infantry, under Sir Archibald Campbell's personal direction, led the attack on the right, accompanied by four guns of the Bengal Horse Artillery, and, I think, a portion of the Body Guard, and supported by H.M. 89th Regiment. That on the left was made by H.M. 38th and 41st Regiments, and two guns of the Madras Artillery, under the command of Brigadier-General Cotton; whilst Lieut.-Colonel Parlby, with the brave 43rd Madras N.I., advanced up the banks of the Irawaddi—our extreme left—to prevent the enemy from sending troops to our rear in that direction. At the first assault the Burmese flinched not, but received both attacks with a display of resolute composure that very soon subsided before the rapid fire and steady charge of British soldiers. A considerable number of their force now retreated into a well-constructed field-work, where they were so hotly pursued that no time was given them for defence, and here from three to four hundred of them perished, either by the bayonet or in their attempts to escape by plunging into the river.

The enemy, perceiving both his flanks thus attacked, and our centre apparently unsoldiered, pushed

a strong column by the main road towards a rising ground in our rear, over which many pagodas were scattered; but at beholding the 89th Regiment in reserve and ready to "fall on," they desisted. The attack continued for five hours, and, carried on over a space of about four miles, ended in the total subjugation of the Burman power assembled at Pagam-mew. Nor had the warfare been without its attendant benefits; the operations of the British force, by land and water, had released from the tyranny of the enemy upwards of 25,000 of the inhabitants of the lower provinces, who had been detained and driven before his retiring boats and army, (many of them from the commencement of the war) since the fall of Malown;—nor had we been many hours in occupation of Pagam-mew before three or four thousand family boats had passed quietly down the river! This was the crowning affair, and the war, we now confidently hoped, was almost at an end.

But this victory was not destined to give unlimited satisfaction to me, since it very nearly caused me the loss of a dear and true friend. Frank Singleton was about my own age; grave, sedate, brave as the sword of the bravest, he had that certain indescribable charm about him which is always equally sure of winning the love of woman and the friendship of man. I had first encountered him at Madras, before the ship which was to convey us both to Rangoon was reported ready to receive us. We were thrown together at the unusually dull and disagreeable depot of Poonamallee, where a detachment of his regiment, H.M. ——, was under orders to proceed on foreign

service. He was, like myself, a subaltern; and, like myself, without any claims on the "aristocracy" of birth, or riches. Drawn together by similarity of tastes on major subjects, though with a very distinct variety of opinions on minor matters, we passed the few weeks before sailing almost entirely together; the only interloper being a young ensign of his regiment, formerly known to him at school in England, and in whose strength of principle he had a very limited confidence. Indeed, the singular aversion he at times displayed to any familiarity with Charles Tanfield (for so he was named) used to astonish me, being at such variance with his general character, which was uncommonly free from any bias of prejudice or want of charity.

"I do not so much dislike as distrust him," he would say to me. "Indeed, I have a strange pity for him, and I will tell you why. His mother was the friend of mine, dying broken-hearted from the ill-conduct of her husband—a man who subsequently lost caste by the display of actual cowardice in a duel. Now Charles, who bears a strong resemblance to his late father, was once taunted with this circumstance at school, and I shall never forget his manner of bearing the insult. It was not that of a manly boy; but it was not perhaps observed, for the reason that one and all blamed the giver of the insult, who was hooted from the group. But afterwards, far from avoiding this very youth, Tanfield selected him as his bosom friend, and they were inseparable. Tanfield is—I fear to give expression to the thought, yet I am convinced of it—a *craven*. He is good-

natured, and pleasant, but truthless and deceitful. I know that his relations strove in vain to get him some other livelihood, at his earnest desire; but their only interest was connected with the army, and here he is! I sincerely hope he may do no dishonour to his sword."

Soon after, we three sailed together in the Hastings for Rangoon; a most comfortless, overloaded vessel, where the poor subalterns had neither berths nor room in the steerage to hang a hammock, but were glad to be permitted the indulgence of a mattrass on the floor of the cuddy — preferring that to the crowded steerage, whence close air and unwholesome smells were ineffectual in expelling the revolting vermin that infested it—cockroaches that actually swarmed, issuing at night, and, as it would seem, at concerted moments, in voluminous squads from every crevice and cranny in the ship's timbers! Nor were we quite free from their nocturnal visits in our fastnesses in the large cabin. With what shuddering sensations did we used to hear the first mysterious but unmistakeable movement made by their outrunners, preparatory to a sally! With what a shrinking of limbs, and gathering together of garments did we huddle under our sheets and palampores almost unto suffocation, when from some one point or corner we heard them commence their unaccountable race. First, a few straggling cohorts; presently a strong phalanx, extending in line; lastly, a whole force of millions, scampering over and across us, the whole breadth and length of the cabin. And then, suddenly as it began, the inroad ceased, and all was

still, save here and there a rustle as of a slimy wing in contact with an obstacle; then how carefully we unwrapped ourselves, perspiring at every pore, from our swaddling bands, and laughing, too, even whilst we shuddered to discover that some of our clammy assailants remained fixtures in the threads of our coverlids, or even struggled amidst our hair! And then how we slammed about with slipper or shoe wherever we thought there might be a chance of hitting a cockroach! Now has any great naturalist ever expounded the nature of these horrid creatures, and the causes which excite them to those sudden, brief, and mysterious outbreaks during certain watches of the night?

But there were other and more grim insects—nay, reptiles, on board of the Hastings than our innocent cockroaches, whose only known cruelty was their frequent attempts to nibble our toe-nails. Once we found a huge centipede in the lid of one of the lockers, on which at the moment Tanfield was adjusting his pillow; nor did I wonder that he screamed and fled, even as a girl might do, for I felt very much inclined to do the same thing; and in the lower regions spiders of an enormous size were numerous —they must have been a species of tarantula, great big-bellied, hairy, hideous monsters, of whom our native servants stood in great panic, accounting them, perhaps with reason, quite capable of inflicting a venomous bite.

As we entered the mouth of the Rangoon river, we struck upon a sandbank, and there we lay for three days in a somewhat perilous position, firing

guns of distress that brought no assistance all that time; and lastly losing all our anchors in a strong current of sea, that coming up with the tide, after leaving us for some hours high and dry, caused more than one heart in the vessel to throb with fear. The troops were worked off their legs in their endeavours to wear the ship from the sandbank, and, without an exception, behaved manfully. Two fine young fellows, Europeans, were lost in our actual sight. During the retreat of the tide they had descended the ship's side, and were scampering thoughtlessly on the dry space of sand around; unfortunately they wandered too far, and we on board were busily inspecting through glasses a crowd of savage natives that had assembled on the beach, at a distance of perhaps a mile. But presently the tide returned with amazing rapidity, and loud cries drew the attention of everybody on board to the unfortunate soldiers, already up to their necks in the water! We shouted out encouragingly, telling them to swim; it was almost all we could do, for one of our boats had been lost with the last anchor, and the other had by an accident been stove in that very morning. Meanwhile casks, ropes, spars, were flung overboard, and the poor fellows were swimming bravely. They did not, however, seem to make any progress. The currents of the tide were against them, and by and by he who seemed the strongest suddenly disappeared. The surf rolled high; the waves might have concealed him from us, and many of us believed that he might have been carried ashore; if so, he probably suffered a severer death at the hands of the cruel Burmese than

awaited him in the ocean. But the other had reached a cask; he is almost upon it; twice, thrice he has gained it,—twice, thrice has it evaded his grasp! Unnerved, chilled, he may have possessed no strength to retain it; for lo! it dashes away from him on the top of a surge, and with it goes his last hope!—Nay, who knows? The sky is above him, and his creed may have taught him to look for life hereafter in that heaven which now looks down upon his death,—for he is dead! We saw him sink, and knew that all was over! Still we continued to utter our signals of distress—"the minute gun at sea"—and at last succour came when hope was nearly extinct. Two vessels drew near, and worked us off the sandbank. It was before they hove in sight that the terror and excitement of Charles Tanfield first attracted my attention. There was in it something that terrified me, something humiliating. We all know how farce mingles with the exhibition of physical fear; but in this instance there was nothing of that. Perhaps the serious character of attendant circumstances might have nullified any sensation of the ridiculous, which, under different phases of event, might have reigned; but certain it is that a mingled feeling of pity and disgust overcame me as I beheld the inexpressible terror that overpowered him, until it compelled him to rush down to the hold, where I saw him, his head buried in a sail, cower in palsied agony, whimpering almost like a child. I do not think that any other beheld this sight but Frank Singleton, who hurried down to him and forced him to swallow some spirits, in which I saw him pour a

few drops of laudanum. But in after times the fact returned to my memory.

Arrived at Rangoon we were severally ordered to join our regiments, his being posted on the beautiful heights round the Shoè Dagon Pagoda, which glittered afar in its gorgeous gilding, its multitudinous tiny bells swinging in the gentlest breeze, and making a pleasing harmony; mine being stationed within the stockade. We saw little of each other now; nor during the stir of renewed hostilities, when, after the cessation of the rains, an advance was made up the river, did we more than occasionally meet. But after many months of severe campaigning, our corps once more encountered each other at Pagam-mew, and there, though he was not even wounded in the day's action, occurred the incident that which had very nearly cost him his life. In the list of casualties transmitted by the officer commanding the regiment in which my friend was, appeared the name of "Ensign Tanfield *missing!*" Amongst the dead no search succeeded in finding him; no one had seen him wounded; and it was only on strict investigation that two privates of his company confessed to having seen him, during the thick of a hand-to-hand engagement with the enemy, retire from the front to the rear of the company, whence he did not appear again. A non-commissioned officer, belonging to another corps, stated that he had met an officer of H.M.'s —— Regiment retiring in great confusion; believing him to be wounded, he addressed him, but was repulsed, the officer exclaiming—"No, no; join your party. I have instructions." And considering the gentleman

to have been despatched on some official duty, he thought no more of it. The surmises were, that, seized by sudden illness he had withdrawn to some thickets which overran the country in the direction he had taken, and had there fallen in with some stragglers of the repelled foe who had slain him. But Singleton and I thought otherwise, concealing, however, from all the opinions we could not help encouraging. On that evening, we were together unintruded on; and we freely discussed the mystery of Tanfield's disappearance. We had come to the conclusion, howsoever unjust and uncharitable, that an insurmountable panic had caused him to take flight from the battle!

Then we talked over the multiplicity of singular instances that have from time to time occurred, to prove the existence of what is, amongst soldiers, called "the white feather!" That sudden panics have unaccountably, and when least looked for, arisen in a well-disciplined body of brave troops is an indisputable and known fact: it cannot, then, be brought forward as evidence of constitutional cowardice, but rather of a psychological idiosyncracy that has its origin in some mental or bodily ailment of the moment, which, breaking out in one individual, passes from him like some venomous electricity till it pervades all around him. When an officer, who has previously and invariably given proofs of calm bravery and self-possession, all of a sudden betrays new and irrepressible testimonies of physical fear, surely there must be momentary derangement of the mental organisation; proceeding

from some inscrutable disease? But when all the fore-knowledge of a man's disposition goes to prove him of a naturally timid and dastardly temperament, we have then the right to consider him the lawful inheritor of — oh! dreary possession! — *the white feather!* During the Burmese war, as during every other war, we cannot ignore the existence of such cases. An officer, who was, however, no favourite amongst his superiors or inferiors, was ordered, during the besiegement of the stockade at Kemmendine, near Rangoon, to make a reconnaissance through a small sally-port which entered upon a part of the forest whence no movements announced the presence of the enemy. As the men (Europeans) defiled through the narrow gateway, Captain —— issued the order—"Go on, my men!" to which *one* refractory voice, interpreting the thoughts of many, answered, "A British officer's command ought to be —'*Come on*, my men!'" No notice was taken of this mutinous rejoinder; but afterwards, during the attack of Donabew, when Captain —— was missing, and the downfall of the place was all but anticipated, he was discovered safely ensconced in one of those monster jars of Pegu manufacture, which, like the oil vessels of Ali-Baba, were quite large enough to give shelter each to its respective inmate. This could not be overlooked; but as the public condemnation of such an affair was of too disgraceful a nature to be bruited during the height of war, the Captain was at once quietly removed from the service to the invalids, and sent back to Madras. Even such an act of cowardice is scarcely so bad as the

treachery which induced another officer, an Irish gentleman belonging to H.M. —— Regiment, to walk over to the enemy's force one day, at Prome, where he deliberately put the commanding chieftain in possession of the whole numerical strength of each individual regiment in Sir A. Campbell's army, their different positions, expected movements, &c.; no doubt expecting that high honours, wealth, and rank, amongst the Burmans, would reward him for his conduct. Justly was he deceived! He was placed in irons, full advantage taken of his suggestions, and retained in hard captivity till the end of the war, when he was sent back a prisoner to the British, with the contumely he so strictly deserved! This wretched creature, who deserved to be shot, was, in the same quiet way, cashiered; and it has been reported that, some few years afterwards, he died in extreme want in an obscure part of Ireland. All these matters were discussed by Frank Singleton and myself, until at last he resolved on making an application to be permitted to scour the adjacent country for a few miles in the direction of the place where Tanfield had been last seen, under the pretext of looking for his body. It was known by the officer in command of their regiment that they had been early acquaintances, and the request was granted. Nor had I any difficulty, during the regnant calm in warfare, in obtaining leave to accompany the party.

No danger being contemplated from lurking foes in the present crisis, the party under the command of my friend Singleton only amounted to thirty men; and on the bright dewy morning following upon our

conversation, we left camp for that part of the division on the extreme left of Pagam-mew, where H.M.'s —— Regiment had been latterly engaged. We could trace the whole current of the fight; and indeed the men were with us who had last seen and spoken to Tanfield. A thicket, gradually winding into low bushwood, trended from the field of battle to the east, and here ceased every vestige of the contest. With exactness had we examined every spot of ground up to this thicket, and here we extended the men, determined to let no bush remain unsearched. We found some difficulty, however, in piercing the mazy fastness, owing to the spiny quality of the bushes—a species of acacia; but, after some delay, a shout from one of the men in front advised us that the jungle was at an end, and, as he chose to term it, "land in sight." A few minutes more brought us to a rising ground, where the brushwood terminating, we found ourselves amongst cultivated fields, neglected however, and showing the proximity of strife, for the bodies of two Burmese, already swollen and festering, lay side by side, while all around appeared the marks of horses' feet. We then saw that we had lost time by penetrating the jungle, since a path wound round the ascent by which we could have advanced more quickly; and in the spot we were on we recognised the scene of a gallant affair which took place between a strong body of the enemy and the Governor-General's body guard, under the command of a brave Mahomedan Soobadar. In front of us, down a steep hill, we now beheld a *keoum*, or monastery; and as the track which led to

it appeared untrodden, we resolved to make this building the boundary of our progress, for we had now spent several hours in a vain search, and might have walked some six miles, though we could not be quite that distance from camp. On then, we went, and at the very foot of the declivity one of the foremost men, stooping down, picked up a *button!* It was an officer's button, and bore the regimental number of the corps to which our own party belonged.

"It is Ensign Tanfield's, Sir!" said the man; and we all felt a conviction of such being the case. Slowly and pryingly we advanced; not a bush, or mound, or stone escaped investigation; and at last we stood before the kcoum. It was an ancient dismantled place, and had evidently long ceased to give shelter to priest or neophyte. In fact, merely the skeleton outlines of the wood-built edifice remained complete, and many of the stakes and piles of timber lay overthrown and rotting, forming obstacles in our search scarcely less troublesome than the sharp spines of the acacia jungle. At that moment, as I was cautiously stepping over a log of wood, from which rushed a hideous guana, a cry was heard, and in advance of me a voice exclaimed—"By Heaven, the Lieutenant has fallen into the well!"

I sprang on, and over every impediment of soil or wood, till reaching the farther side of the kcoum, I beheld a group of many standing round a ruined draw-well. Covered with bamboos, matting, and sere leaves, its mouth had escaped detection, and placing his feet on the treacherous mass, Frank Singleton had fallen with it into the abyss! Not a man of us

lost our self-possession, though for a moment the entire silence awed me into a despairing fear. At length, as we leant over the pit, whilst the men had instinctively busied themselves in looking about for any material that might be of assistance, a voice was heard—"Do not be alarmed, my friends; I am alive, but I fear my right leg is broken, and I feel faint."

It is impossible to describe the celerity with which the men now set to work, nor the silent earnestness with which they applied themselves to their labour of love,—for such it was; they loved their young officer, and now they were about to prove that they did so. Jackets were flung off; so were trousers, remorselessly; shirts were disregarded; handkerchiefs came into play, and in less time than I can tell it, Frank was extricated from his perilous position, hanging by the hands to the strangely fashioned ladder that had been *improvised* for him! The poor fellow's leg was broken, but he bore it bravely, nor did he faint.

"There was no water in the well," he said, "nor was it, as you see, of any depth, for it must have been filled up; but I sickened at the loathsome smell of something against which I lay. Either it is carrion, or—a dead body! Pah! I smell it still!"

"Good God, what is this?" I exclaimed, as adhering to the clasp of his sword belt, which had worn itself round to his back, I perceived a silk handkerchief of bright blue—a handkerchief which I instantly recognized as having belonged to Tanfield.

"Oh, then, Sir, it is the Ensign's own handkercher," said Millin, the soldier who was used to clean

Singleton's and Tanfield's accoutrements. "I *see* it on him, sure enough, that very morning."

To make a long story short, we left the spot instantly, for my friend's limb required immediate assistance; he is lame to this day, but his heart is as warm as ever, and he has those around him who know how to repay love with love. On our reporting the success of our adventure—strange success, that involved the damage of a limb and the probable recovery of a corpse!—a party of pioneers were sent out to the ruined *keoum*, under the command of the serjeant who had accompanied us, with strict injunctions to investigate the contents of the well. They returned with the mutilated body of Charles Tanfield, already putrid from the heat of two sultry days. Mutilated, indeed! for it was cut and hacked about, as if the knives of many savages had been exercised upon it. His face alone was without scar, nor was his body deprived of any part of its raiment. His breast and side were pierced through and through, and, as the surgeon said, one of the many wounds had been enough to kill him; so that the others must have been given from the mere brutal cupidity of inflicting cruelty on even the inanimate.

Poor fellow!—if he fled (and charity may be allowed to provide the benefit of a doubt), he fled to the very jaws of death! If a coward he found the death which has awaited many a brave man, in the arms of his enemy.

THE FEAR AND THE HOPE.

My thoughts within me grow at times so high,
That, looking at them 'twixt the earth and sky,
They dazzle me with glow of green and gold:
Thus ripe fruits hang i' the sun
On haughty walls, unwon
By longing little hands that pine their sweets to hold.

Is then, the stature of my mind so low,
That I can never hope to reach the show
Imagination forms of fruitage fine,
Which gleams before the eye
Of thought too far and high
To come within a grasp so weak and dwarfed as mine?

After long hours of pain, when Love seems lost
In swampy selfishness, and Hope is tossed
About wild waves that lend no rock to rest on,—
Then suddenly comes Ease,
Smoothing the mind's rough seas,
'Till they are fit for Hope, fair swan! to build its nest on!

Then, when exempt from physical cares, it is
Those visions bright approach me, ripe with bliss,
Singing glad Yea-words, fraught with hope, that make
Each sublunary care
A bubble of the air,
Whilst momentary ease a lasting shape doth take.

Oh Hope, fair Hope! deceiving Hope! but still
Consoling Hope! I would not have aught chill
Thy warm tides in my soul; but when I sought them,
And found them, prize them well——
Dear are the tales they tell
Of Apples, sour in May, that sweeten ere 'tis Autumn!

A NIGHT IN THE WOODS OF AVA.

During the month of November, 1825, the British Forces under Sir Archibald Campbell, having then advanced to Prome, the Burmese in closing in upon our front, had been unremitting in their endeavours to intercept our communication with Rangoon, whence all our stores, provisions, &c., from Bengal and Madras, were transmitted to us, up the Irawaddy river. Large bodies of their troops were constantly passing on both sides of the stream, ready to launch their war-boats and canoes, in seizure of our provisions, and otherwise falling upon our allies from Rangoon, thereby retarding the General's advance up the country, and harassing our convoys of stores and treasure. Some of those itinerant bands of Burmese, half pirate, half marauder, overran the Surrawaddy district, and a strong detachment under Lieutenant-Colonel Godwin, was dispatched from Prome for the purpose of driving the enemy from Shodoun; to which place the Lieutenant-Colonel marched in gallant style, and succeeded in clearing the left bank of the river for fifteen miles below Prome. On the Western Bank, at Paddounmew, one hundred men of H.M. Royal

regiment, and an equal number of Madras Native Infantry were stationed, under the command of Captain Deane, of the Royals, and supported by a division of the Flotilla, under Lieutenant Kellett, of the navy. This party was repeatedly attacked by the enemy in great force, but repelled by equal determination and bravery. During a nocturnal attack, however, a young subaltern of my regiment in charge of a small detachment of Sepoys, was wounded, and I was sent to replace him. It was soon after that the incidents occurred which I am now about to relate.

On the early morning of the 20th November, 1825, a bright, warm dewy morning, such as greets us occasionally in England in a glowing May, we were reconnoitering from our little stockaded position the country across the river, on whose banks Paddown was situated, when all at once Captain Deane turning his eyes towards the jungle in our rear, exclaimed, "There they come!" and at the distance of perhaps, a quarter of a mile, there in truth they were —the Burmese! The village of Paddown, at one end of which our stockade was planted, was only occupied by a guard of ours, whilst its river-face was protected by the flotilla; a clear space in our rear for nearly half a mile, terminated in jungle, and thence we could see that the Burmese were advancing in some force in front of our left, marching in three columns across our front, for the attack of our right, left, and centre—their main object being evidently to gain the right of the abandoned village. A party was instantly sent to turn their left, which was done

speedily; the Burmese retiring in confusion and with considerable loss. Captain Deane then moved forward with the greater portion of his detachment to attack their centre, which also retired in confusion after a few rounds; while a strong picquet, which had been placed by us to dispute the passage of a bridge on the left of the village was attacked by the enemy's left, but succeeded in effectually repelling them, with the prompt assistance of Lieutenant Kellett's boats. At this juncture, however, when the foe was retreating with their wounded and dead, whilst our small force only numbered one wounded, the Burmese contrived to set fire to the long straggling village, which compelled us to withdraw our picquet thence, and retreat within our stockade, until the whole extent of slight bamboo edifices had become a mass of smoking ashes. It takes but a short time to consume a Burman town; but though the description of this little skirmish has not occupied more than a few minutes, it did not terminate before the day had begun to show symptoms of declining into evening, and then it was discovered that the native officer of my detachment, who had been posted with the picquet in the village, was missing!

It was remembered that, during the action he was particularly active and alert, but that when the fire, which had broken out, rendered their retreat to the stockade necessary, he had told the men to proceed, as he wished to enter a house which the flames had not yet approached, to rescue from it a pretty young kid, which he had found in the village, and tied up in the empty hut near the picquet. There, the conflagra-

tion over, search was made, but no traces discovered; and as he was a man well known to me and much esteemed, I felt great anxiety regarding him. Night, however, was soon upon us, when nothing more in the way of search could be done; but Captain D. promised that the rise of the sun should see me in charge of a few men, with whom I might reconnoitre the adjacent fields and skirts of the jungle. Morning came, and the promise was fulfilled; we traversed the whole extent of the ruined and burned village, here and there coming upon a house which had partially escaped the Fire Spirit's invasion, and occasionally coming upon the *vestigia* of retreating foes—here a spear cast aside, there a sharp-edged *dah*, or war-hatchet, and anon the forsaken corpse of perhaps the owner; but trace of Jemadar Shaik Ismael there was none! We proceeded to the outskirts of the jungle, but here a few jinjals, scattered about and abandoned in flight, were all that we discovered. It was, however, sufficient to prove that the enemy had not returned during the night; satisfied with carrying off their dead, they had evidently retreated, probably altogether. The sound of a bugle recalled us, as the gongs from our flotilla announced the tenth hour of the morning. From my report, the Commandant seemed to think that the enemy had retired in despair of succeeding in shaking the strength of our position, but of the Jemadar's fate he could form no other opinion than that he must have been destroyed in the conflagration. Enquiries were made amongst the native troops, who had long known his habits, but they assured me he was neither subject to fits of

any kind, nor likely to have yielded to fatigue or sleep. How it befell that, as the heat of the day began to subside, I felt a strange longing to wander out about the ruined village, I cannot explain. Suffice it to say, that contrary to orders, contrary to the dictates of prudence, I stole out of the stockade, and found myself almost unconsciously beyond the last smouldering relic of the hamlet ere a sense of my indiscretion struck me.

It was a strange thing that this sense of indiscretion was conveyed to me by the sight of an object that in itself was productive of hope. My foot struck against some metallic substance, which, on stooping to pick it up, I found to be the breast-plate of a native officer. It bore the number of my regiment; it was then the Jemadar's! Here then he had been; at least half a mile from the house into which he had gone for the kid; how then had he come hither? The ground was loamy, and the marks of many feet evidenced that a crowd of people had passed the spot. He had been then conveyed here—forcibly, of course? Scarcely had these thoughts—the *avant couriers* of disagreeable actions—crossed my mind, ere a tremendous yell—a rush from the jungle—and a blow that felled me to the earth, rendering me instantly senseless, put an end to all doubts as to the proximity of the enemy. Even as I fainted, I felt that I was in their hands; and when I recovered from my temporary unconsciousness, I found that I was strongly pinioned, hand and foot, and carried along at a rapid rate by a body of Burmese. Great pain in my head, from which I felt the blood trickle down my back, told

me that the blow had done more than produce faintness; and I shut my eyes, but not before I could distinguish that there were at least twenty or more men around me. In complete silence we proceeded for I know not how long, for pain counts moments as years; but the waning light of day spoke of lateness, and ere long the party drew up, words were spoken, I was laid down amongst thick grass below a large tree, and presently a man drew near, unbound my wrists, leaving my feet still tightly fastened together, and with unanticipated kindness raising me to a sitting posture, put some cold boiled rice before me. I could not eat, but drank greedily of the water contained in a pot beside it. I looked around, and saw that all were engaged in eating, and had evidently pitched upon their bivouac for the night. The moon was beginning to throw silvery lines of light amongst the trees, and a strange beauty in the whole scene fascinated me, even whilst my head throbbed with pain, and a degree of apprehension, easily accounted for, agitated me. I felt my wounded scalp, which, though painful, no longer bleed; nor did I fear any dangerous results in consequence; but when I attempted to jabber some words of Burmese, with a desire to glean some information of their intentions, the only Burman near me—probably the selected sentinel over me—shook his head, laughed, and then showing me his knife, drew it across my throat lightly, and then pointing onwards, seemed to indicate that when I had gone a certain distance they meant to sacrifice me. I shuddered, for I could not ignore that horrible cruelties had been heaped upon

some of their captives; whilst on the other hand, some of the British whom they had succeeded in carrying off, had been dealt humanely with. I remembered that the American Missionaries, the Judsons, were still in close but safe captivity at Amerapoora, where, though said to be strictly guarded, they had not been tortured or harshly treated. Then would come the idea that this party, being an offshoot from the grand army, were merely common marauders, who, finding no benefit from taking me with them, would not scruple to knock me on the head, or stab me to the heart, as a pastime; and I bethought me of the brave Colonel Conry, whose body was discovered crucified, head downwards; and of other Europeans, killed at the Syriam pagoda, whom they had put to death by torture.

Suddenly these thoughts were put to flight, like birds of ill omen, by a piercing yell in the jungle, to which a similar discordant cry from our party was given in reply; and in a few minutes, a band of about thirty men, heavily laden, joined our group. Great joy was expressed on both sides at this meeting, and before long, I became aware of the nature of the burdens, with which the new comers were loaded. They were hampers of salted beef and pork, &c., the provisions for the British army; barrels of biscuit, and several large kegs of spirits! As I sat watching them, as they began to unpack one of the hampers, whilst a large fire was being kindled, a groan struck on my ears, and I saw that one of the packages—thrown down carelessly at no great distance from me, was a prisoner, like myself; but still

more hardly dealt with, as he seemed to be bound hand and foot in a ball-like lump. Attracted by the groan, he who appeared to be chief of my party, accosted the newly arrived men, and apparently in obedience to directions given by him, the other captive was untied, and placed under a tree close to that which formed my woodland canopy. The poor wretch had been so long manacled in a painful and unnatural position, that it was some time before he could even stretch out a hand, or leg; fastened by the waist to the bole of the tree, his legs were left free, but as his back was towards me, I could not discern his face. I knew, however, that it was not a European, and presently, when in a feeble voice, I heard him ask for water in the Burmese language, I imagined that he was one of their own race. I was deceived; for after drinking largely of the draught, I heard the deep—"*Shookur oolla!*" (Thank God!) of a Mahomedan. And now a scene commenced, from which I knew not whether to glean hope or apprehension!—a scene of feasting and of gluttonous revelry upon the provisions, which had been discovered in the hampers. Some of these viands had been placed upon stones in the fire; others seemed to demand no cooking; and all began to eat immoderately. Oh! that thirst would follow, and be satisfied, thought I! and even as I formed the wish, it was granted! A keg of liquor, arrack, or rum, was opened and passed round; a second followed; the orgie was waxing fierce and furious; but now they discovered a basket in which were placed bottles of—*wine?* was it? No,—they were those large cases

of French liquers which one sees so seldom in a campaign. Annizette, Curaçoa, I don't know what! But on opening and tasting them, the already intoxicated savages could restrain themselves not at all, and they sipped, and sipped, until, literally as they sat sipping, they fell asleep, or sick upon the ground. It was a strange, yet revolting spectacle, which the moon, now brightly shining, and the lurid flames of the fire revealed; but as I gazed, I felt that their vicious indulgence might facilitate my escape. I had forgotten my brother-captive, and now turned round my head to look at him. I could not see his face, but he was intently gazing at the scene. The Burmese had neglected to bind me to the tree, though the rope which was fastened round my waist, testified that to this use had they intended to put it. Slowly I attempted to roll towards my companion, but though my wrists were no longer bound together, my arms were so tightly tied to my body by the cords, that I was sure my flesh was lacerated, and the pain the movement gave me, forced a long groan from my lips.

"*Ai Khooda! kown hie!*—Oh God, who is it?" whispered the captive, as he vainly tried to turn his head towards me.

"I am an English officer," answered I, in the same low tone, and in Hindostanee; "and you—who are you?" for the exclamation had convinced me, that my neighbour was a Mahomedan.

"I am tied to the tree," he said, "but my hands and feet are free. I seem to know your voice. Cannot you approach?" Again I moved, awkwardly

enough, and not without pain, and this time I was close to him. He was so situated that he could not turn his head beyond the bole of the tree, but I now saw the outline of his countenance.

"Jemadar Shaik Ismael!" exclaimed I. I had no sooner whispered the name that I regretted it, for the poor fellow in his wonder uttered a loud cry that aroused one of the slumbering gluttons; who, however, after raising himself on his elbow and unable to retain that position, fell back again on his grassy couch. Poor Shaik Ismael's feelings were of a very mingled yarn, at recognizing me, for while he joyed in the idea that we might mutually assist each other, he lamented to find his officer in so perilous a predicament.

"Is there hope?" asked I.

"*Jub tuluk às hie tub tuluk sàs hie!*" was his reply, in a common proverb, "While there is life there is hope! Turn your legs, sir, towards me, as high up on my breast as you can."

I did so, with some difficulty; and sooner than might have been expected, he succeeded in undoing the ligatures that bound my feet. As I felt them once more free, a glow and a vigour permeated my whole system; and in another moment, my arms also were set at liberty. I had now to perform a similar office for the Jemadar, and when we were alike without chain or fetter, we remained for some minutes in mute thankfulness to that Providence which had vouchsafed thus to bring us in aid of each other. In another minute, we were standing beneath the trees, our captors chained still more heavily than the hands

of men had chained us, by their indulgence in a vice which more truly disables than age, or disease, or poverty!

I cannot so quickly relate as were performed the next scenes in this play. What never occurred in romances occurred now, and throws a kitchen-lamp light of farce on what, in fiction, should be the tragic glare of torches or waxen candles. As stealthily we passed the stupified Burmans, I know not what induced me, even whilst trembling with fear, to seize a pint-bottle of cherry-brandy, which lay still untouched on the ground! The Jemadar, more like a hero, seized a *kreese* that glittered sharp beside it; and in five minutes more, we were away in the woods, having made our exit at the point by which I had been brought thither. We then stood for a moment's deliberation. Whither shall we direct our steps? We know not in what quarter the stockade stands, and we must be many miles from it?

"Nay," said the Jemadar, in reply, "I watched yon star arise; it is towards it we must bend our way. Nor are we six miles from Paddown, for they have purposely lingered in the woods, and could we but hit upon the right path, we should soon reach the detachment. But you are faint."

My head was in truth painful, and I staggered from weakness; but as I staggered, the bottle fell from my hand, and reminded me that it might be of use to our failing spirits. It was soon uncorked, and a few mouthfuls revived me wonderfully; nor did the worthy Mussulman scruple to follow my example. The forest was by no means thick, nor for several

miles had we much difficulty in making our way through it; but then it dwindled in size, brushwood took the place of trees, and under foot the ground grew moist at first, then damper and damper, till at length, being in advance, I plunged head foremost into a bog. Fortunately the Jemadar was not so close upon me as to follow my example, but I felt myself sinking in a quagmire, and I was almost up to the waist before the manful exertions and robust arms of Shaik Ismael succeeded in rescuing me from a dreadful death. We were forced to repose ourselves on the brink of this treacherous morass for some time, and then the painful prickings in my legs and thighs, and in those of my companion in a less degree, apprised us of a new annoyance. We were covered with those minute but hungry and loathsome leeches, with which the marshes, and damp rank vegetation in the vicinity of them, in the Burmese empire, are infested! We washed the mud from our limbs, but the water was already impregnated with blood, and we knew that by tearing the sucking water-vampires from our flesh, dangerous ulcers would ensue! I counted fourteen on my legs and thighs, and a feeling of alarm, as the blood poured down, thrilled through my veins. Fast as we could, we withdrew into the drier ground, and then had nothing to do but wait till the satiated reptiles dropt off, one by one. "Tombakoo! Tobacco!" exclaimed the Jemadar, with a shout of joy, as he found that we were now in a field of that plant, already blackening to ripeness. "We are safe!" he added, "this field is not far from the river, for I was conveyed down the

banks for some miles, and remember our halting near this field, and that hut—behold! They expected to find a canoe hid in the reeds, but could not discover it; and now, sir, chew the leaves of the tobacco, and spit the juice upon the leeches!"

The kindly Jemadar commenced his operations by applying his first salivary sanative to one of the leeches on my leg; nor were the effects dubious or delayed. The creature almost instantly dropped off, and so with the others; but we had some difficulty in quenching the flow of blood, nor indeed did some of the wounds cease bleeding for many hours, and more than one severe sore succeeded to those bites. Retracing our way for some distance, we took a fresh path which the Jemadar remembered to have passed, and just as the dawn of a misty morning began to break, we found ourselves on the margin of the Irawaddy!

The Mahomedan threw himself upon his knees, and thanked Alla for our escape; nor was the Christian without many prayers of thanksgiving for the Providential release from perhaps a cruel death—assuredly from captivity! But, though we had reached the river, were we safe? Yes! for, lo! the mist glides away, like a vapoury spirit, from the bosom of the waters, and close upon us we beheld the welcome spars and sails, and decks of the flotilla boats! In less than an hour, we were in Paddown, surrounded by welcoming and anxious friends, who, in their solicitude to render us the assistance which our harassed bodies required, omitted not to display their curiosity as to what had befallen us. The Jemadar's

story varied but little from my own; scarcely had he entered the house in search of the kid, before he was seized, and nearly strangled, by a party of the enemy who had evidently been employed in setting fire to the village; through which, after binding him in the most barbarous manner, they bore him to the marshy creek, where afterwards we were attacked by the leeches. The blow I had received in the head, and the ulcers caused by two of the leech bites, laid me up for a few days, but the Jemadar was more fortunate; and at the end of another week, the detachment was broken up, and we rejoined our regiments at Prome.

THE FACE: AN EPISODE IN SEPOY LIFE.

A contributor to the *United Service Magazine* has already described with tolerable accuracy some of the military achievements during the *old* Burmese war, with his own personal adventures therein; but although he has narrated the melancholy affair of Watty-gaum, the taking of Malown, and the triumph at Pagam-mew, he has given us no jottings down of the march of the grand army, after the termination of the war, on its return from Yandabu. It may be that he proceeded by water; but having myself accompanied that arm which moved by land, and finding in my path a flower of adventure, which, to pluck and place before the public, may afford some refection to your readers hungering for a change of diet, I offer, in all humility and straightforward prose, the following account of what befel me. It

was on the 5th March, 1826, that the orderly books of the force were enriched by these words, so grateful to many a weary spirit and suffering body, tired out of all patience by the harassing protraction of a war, which should have been succeeded by no *second* edition of Avan hostilities of equal duration and similar hardships—although such, alas! has malignly conduced to deteriorate the crop of laurels cultivated by the Hon. East India Company:—

"G. O., CAMP AT YANDABU, March 6, 1826.—The happy termination in the encampment of the contest in behalf of the national honour reminds the Major-General of the near approach of the period of his separation from the force; the officers and soldiers of which will shortly, he trusts, return to enjoy an unbroken portion of repose, after their prolonged labours; happy, he doubts not, in the society of those most dear to them, from whom they have been now little short of two years divided. The army, which has deserved so well of the state which it serves, cannot fail to have endeared itself to its General. He will part from it, whenever the moment arrives, with an impression of satisfaction deep and indelible as regards its conduct as a body; and he can assure every individual in its ranks, with a perfect sincerity, that it will hereafter be a source of pride and gratification to him to be enabled to promote in any way the happiness and interest of any soldier who has served under him in Ava. He will not repeat these sentiments, but he requests the officers and crews of H.M. Royal Navy, and the H.C. Flotilla, to accept of the expression of them, applying to themselves without the slightest diminution or reserve."

These were pleasant parting words from Sir Archibald Campbell, but some time elapsed before all the

necessary matters, political and military, were concluded, and the force broken up into bodies, severally proceeding by land to Prome and to Arracan, and by water to Prome and Rangoon. As before stated, I belonged to the land party *en route* to Prome, and we had reached the city of Pagam-mew without any other phases of war-life on our way than such as are presented by a country which has been recently ravaged by not only a defeating but a defeated army, and which is still overrun with bands of undisciplined and predatory natives of its own soil, reduced to desperate measures by oppression and famine. Here and there, however, symptoms of reaction and consequent recovery were observable; the people began to return to their abandoned homes and fields—the daily necessities of industrial life to awaken energies benumbed by offence and defence, and the willingness with which from remote inland places, more free from the infection of war-influences, the natives brought us what they could for sale—vegetables, dried fish, &c., testified the gladness with which they recognized the promises of a consolidated peace.

There were, it is true, features of less lovely aspect still too prominent on every hand; cities destroyed by fire and pillage, monasteries deserted, fields where the rising vegetation had been trampled into waste, and where the seeds of cultivation lay dormant, or germinated in sinister affluence, fed by the sickly corruption of blood and death. Disease, famine, wretchedness, were to be seen; but they were now seen under aspects that foreboded better days, and therefore were more bearable. In our

encampments, too, there was a gleam of the pervading sunshine, and we bore our well-won laurels with a gilding of its lustre on them which shut out the sanguine crimson that might have otherwise been too visible. Our progress was occasionally impeded by bands of predatory marauders, who committed all sorts of cruel larcenies on their more industrious and amicable countrymen, and once in a while a regiment or detachment was ordered out to scour the country in pursuit. It so happened that I accompanied one of these parties; we found little difficulty in putting the rascals to flight, without bloodshed, I believe; but whilst in hot pursuit of a fellow who had roused my wrath by an ill-directed *stone* flung at me, I somehow found myself at fault in a rugged mountain pass, up which my assailant had disappeared. There were five sepoys of my own regiment with me, nor was I by any means displeased to perceive that I was thus attended; but one and all of us failed to regain the track, which we had left perhaps half an hour before we became aware of our having swerved from it.

In and out of what appeared to be a series of ravines, not encumbered, indeed, by wood of any kind, but rugged, and rocky, and hard to tread, we vainly twisted about in search of a path, and when at last the faint sound of a remote bugle fell upon our ears, we acknowledged that we must have been increasing the distance that cut us off from the detachment. We were fairly puzzled, not that we had any apprehensions of real danger from the enemy, but lest the darkness of night, which already sent forth its advance guard in a deepening and lengthening

shadow, should detain us in a position as ridiculous as it was unpleasant until morning.

In vain we listened for the bugle or drum—we heard it no more; we knew that the camp lay towards the sinking sun, but the departing rays of that sun were now hid from us by a mountain of such bare and rugged proportions as rendered any thoughts of scaling its sides simply contemptible, and we had nothing to do but to follow, as best we could, the direction which appeared most likely to lead us round the base, where a sort of track, no broader than a corporal's sash, seemed to wind. The men were cheerful—nay, merry, but they were tired, and so was I! moreover, the darkness soon fell so thick, that we could make no progress quicker than the forced march of an oppressed tortoise. As it was we stumbled and staggered, counting it great gain to escape with only broken shins and scratched knees, from casual encounters with sharp stones and boulders. I thought it wisdom to abide where we were till the moon rose, for I knew that it would rise soon, and then there was a chance of hearing the drums beat the good night at nine o'clock, which could not now be more than an hour or two distant, though I had no watch to assure me of the fact.

A small rillet of water trickled down the precipice where we halted, and the sepoys had luckily an allowance of parched *dal* (pease), salt fish, &c., to which I joined my bag of biscuits, providentially stowed away in my bosom. Not a tree or bush was near; in fact, the sterility of the spot was so complete, that I could have imagined we had reached the

singular place called Wehmanzoup, but that I knew it must be still many miles in advance.

Wehmanzoup deserves a word of notice. On our approach to Yandabu, I had commanded the rear-guard of Sir A. Campbell's force, on the day we reached this strange hill-post. We had left an encampment in a Palmyra tope, the name of which I forget, but though the distance to Wehmanzoup was only six miles, we were the whole of that tiresome day on the way. The rear-guard, in charge of all that properly belongs to a rear-guard, broke ground at seven o'clock in the morning, and did not reach the army at Wehmanzoup before eight at night; yet we did not lose our way, we were not harassed by the enemy, nor did we loiter or lag. The reader may then conceive the difficulties and obstacles which retarded our progress; the roads were all but impassable, from the rocky nature of the country we passed through—at best but a narrow track, they proved terrible to the wretched commissariat cattle, which, in the last state of starvation and debility, from fatigue and want of provender, had to drag heavy loads of provisions, of the sick, of stores of all kinds, across deep gullies, covered with sand, up steep, precipitous crags—where many lay down to die—and then down abrupt and broken declivities, that rendered their sufferings terrible to behold; driven, too, as they were, with a cruel force by the drivers, that made it morally impossible for me to look on and permit it; yet our orders were to leave nothing behind. In spite of which, we were forced to abandon much; nor, when the cause became

known, was any displeasure evinced, for no blame was due to any one. Great was our fatigue when we reached the camp of Sir Archibald Campbell, most picturesquely pitched on a craggy table-land; at one point towering over the magnificent Irrawaddy, whose waters rushed like the waves of the sea against cliffs that were here clothed with sparse vegetation. Several beautiful *keoums*, or monasteries, and Boodh temples studded the jutting crags that whimsically cropped in and out of the mainland mountain, and I should have delighted in studying the aspects of the spot at more leisure than was afforded me. But to return to the ravine, which I knew to be distant from the scene I have just described, and where we waited for the rising of the moon, some of us drowsily enough, although, with one exception, there was no symptom of depression or over-fatigue. Cheerfully we chatted, as sepoys will ever do when their officers treat them manfully, as men and soldiers—not, as is to be regretted, they sometimes do—like serfs and mercenaries of the basest description.

The exception to which I have referred, was a young man of extremely prepossessing exterior and manners; he was well known to me, being one of the smartest and bravest privates in the company to which I belonged—the grenadiers. Severely wounded in the unfortunate affair at Wattygaum,* Syed Roostum had excited an interest in the officers by his conduct on that occasion, and by the patient

* Vide "United Service Magazine," February, 1852, p. 188.

courage with which he had subsequently undergone much pain from the nature of his wound; of which, however, no traces remained. Promotion awaited him, and on several duties of trust, he was selected as a man in whom complete reliance could be placed.

I had remarked during the whole of this day that, instead of joining in the conversation of his comrades, or evincing his usual hilarious activity, he was silent, seeming immersed in thought. On asking him if he was unwell, his reply was not to the point; and soon after, when I happened to lag behind, he also fell back, and whispered that he experienced strange and unpleasant sensations—presentiments of he knew not what—which he did not wish to reveal to his companions. I urged him to endeavour to shake them off, they were but the result of fatigue—premonitory symptoms of slight fever, to which he had been subject—or want of food. He smiled at this, shook his head, and in answer said what alarmed me more than I confessed, inasmuch as in my own temperament there lurked a remnant of superstition, which I may have derived from a youth passed amongst the wilds of the Scottish highlands, where for nurse I possessed one of the most visionary old women that ever saw ghost, heard fairy, or believed in second sight.

"Sahib," he said, "my race has a *fál* (omen) upon it. None of my family have died for many years, without first having a warning of the coming Angel of Death." I demanded an explanation, and he spoke as follows: "The legend attached to our race is this,—one of my ancestors, a man of nobility and

opulence at the court of Bejapore in a fit of unjust jealousy, slew the pure wife of his bosom and her brother, whom an enemy had taught him to believe was a paramour. He never knew peace of mind thereafter; at night, he dared not remain without the glare of many lights around him, for if left for one moment in obscurity, before him in the vacant air would shine forth a FACE!—a human face,—that of her who had been so dear! Haunted by this phantom countenance, his life was a perpetual suffering, and the end came. One night a fearful tempest raged; during a violent gust of wind, the lamps that lit the chamber in which he lay, with several attendants round him, were suddenly and together extinguished. At that instant the face looked out at him from total darkness, and with a cry of frenzy he sprang to the balcony, overlooking a moat that was full of water. Head foremost he plunged in, and was drowned. Alas! the curse died not with him, though of late years its malignity has been extenuated into the guise of a warning."

"But," said I, "that was long ago. There have been no recent experiences of its existence."

"Pardon me, Sahib! My grandfather beheld it but once, and it was the night before he was killed in action at Seringapatam. My father had always sneered at such things, as I too have done, but one day in broad daylight, in health and high spirits, for he had just received the general order which conferred on him a soubadar's commission for bravery, he was in the twinkling of a moment seized with violent trembling, and whilst my mother was holding

a cup of water to his lips, suddenly arrested her arm, and pointing to the wall opposite, asked her 'who had placed that picture there?' In wonder my mother turned but saw nothing. 'It is the *Soorut-i-naseeb!* the face of my Fate,' cried he; 'it has disappeared, but I saw it *there*, bright and beautiful, as if alive.' Nevertheless he was cheered by his promotion, the trembling had subsided as quickly as it had come, and some days passed. No doubt the affair was forgotten, at any rate it was not alluded to; but one afternoon he was summoned in haste to the commandant's house regarding some point of duty; it was close to the lines, but he knew a still shorter road than that which was the regular approach. This lay through a deserted piece of ground that had once been a garden surrounding a house now in ruins; speeding through the thick mass of weeds that had overgrown the path, he trod on a venomous serpent which bit him in the leg. He felt at that moment that death was inevitable; but his courage failed not, he pursued and slew the reptile, proceeded to the commandant's quarters, and there, already sickening, he related what had occurred. All that could be done *was* done—but in vain. He died!"

"Well, Syed Roostum," said I, "after all *you* have seen no face, and why should you imagine that it is to appear to you now?" He made no reply, nor until we had all nestled in the dark, amidst the cliffs, was any allusion made to what he had related by either of us. As we sat there, close to each other, whilst the others were washing their dry mouths and hands in the little rill, I asked him how he felt. "I

am sleepy, Sahib," said he. I bade him lie down beside me, and promised to awake him, "when the moon rose, as it must shortly do now." He suddenly clasped my hand, and pressing it to his lips and brow, exclaimed, "You are my dear friend, as well as esteemed officer, if I am to die, let it be in your service." He lay down, and for about fifteen minutes all was silence. I thought he was asleep, but presently one of the sepoys directed our attention to the opposite side of the ravine, where on the face of the rock they pointed out the glitter of the fireflies. I looked, and in fact saw what I imagined to be fireflies, though I had no recollection of having witnessed those beautiful little night-revellers in Burmah, nor am I now quite satisfied that the light proceeded from them, since it might have been produced by a peculiar species of fungus, which, in a state of decomposition gives forth coruscations of light that resemble the glimmer of glow-worms.

"Fireflies!" cried Roostum, raising himself from the rock, "where are they?" I pointed to the spot, but the cry of awe and horror that broke from his lips can never be forgotten; and the sepoys sprang up, each with his musket in hand, thinking the Burmans were upon us. Syed Roostum stood erect, his hands clasped, and, near as he was, I could see that his eyes were staring wildly at the crag, from which now the glittering light had vanished.

"Oh, Allah!" he said, "it is the *Soorut*—the FACE!" Falling back in my arms, he fainted, and whilst we sprinkled him with water and undid his stock, I gathered from the words of the sepoys that

they were cognizant of the legend which he had related to me. Presently he recovered, and seemed willing to ascribe all that had just happened to illness. One of the men asked him to describe the sight which he had seen,—"was it a hideous visage—that of the *Kalee Kulottee,* the *ghoolee-biaban*—the swart hag, or the demon of the desert?" "No," he replied, "it was the countenance of a young and beautiful woman. It was as if one had taken the head of a lovely female, and placed it, self-supported in the air, where all else was dark. There was no neck, a face alone—nothing but the glorious face, rich in dark, soft, lustrous eyes, features of the most perfect cast, skin fair as a Cashmerian's, a placid brow, across which the jet-black silky hair was simply braided. No frown on that face, Sahib, no smile, but the stillness of death, and in the eyes alone a light, which was not the light of life. I saw it before I spoke, it was not till it had disappeared that I cried out and swooned. Whatever is the will of Allah is good. *Ameen!*"

It was strange; but now, whilst a sort of awe crept over us all, the recovery of Roostum appeared to be complete. He declared that he no longer experienced feelings of exhaustion or gloom, and in truth he displayed none; but he requested that his comrades, all of whom loved him, should be mute regarding the matter, and the promise was readily given. Readily, but scarcely before the sounds, joyful and not remote, of drum and bugle were heard; and the growing light of the rising moon came through the broken fragments of the cliff. Soon was

our extrication from the tangled mazes of this glen effected, nor were we sorry to find that one turning more brought us clear of its windings, and on an open track, which quickly brought us to the encampment.

A day or two passed away, and though I closely watched Syed Roostum, I failed to detect any traces of the recent inexplicable state of excitement, which I began to think had no other origin than a temporary derangement of his system. Modern science ignores phantasmal possibilities that cannot be traced to morbid physical causes. I am almost loth to confess, though conscientiousness renders the avowal requisite, that a voice within me denies the mere material assumptions of such reasoning; and yet, as I pondered on the "*Face-phantom*," I repeatedly asked myself, why such warnings were given aimlessly, or might they not now, as heretofore, be followed by the ill they foreboded? and why foreboded, since in no case had the warning proved preventative! was it then simply a punishment, heaped on the guiltless child for the crime of a guilty progenitor? It is needless to argue about "presentiments!" Few of us who have not experienced them—fewer who do not place some faith in them. Some years later I myself had an "experience" of the kind, which may one day be placed before the readers of this article, if I contrive to summon up energy to recount the sad story. But to proceed. We had reached Yennagheown, celebrated for the Petroleum wells in its vicinity, and as there was a halt, every thing quiet, and I wished to see them, a party was formed to

visit them. Syed Roostum and several other sepoys accompanied us, and we were glad to observe, as we passed through the town, that the inhabitants were flocking fastly in, and every sign of returning traffic exhibited. The town of Yennagheown is of some importance, owing to the great trade that has been carried on in this matter of earth oil. I learnt that at certain seasons the river—for it is near the Irrawaddy—contained at this place from thirty to sixty large merchant boats, for the naptha. Our route lay to the east, through a heavy sandy track cut up by frequent watercourses, now dry, and leading over a series of small hills, affording little vegetation beyond that which was supplied by stunted cassia bushes, and the quaint contorted shrubs of the hispid euphorbium.

In about an hour we reached the wells, from which, long ere we arrived, came upon the wind a pungent aroma that announced their habitat. They may have lain three miles from the river, though there are many further off; but they are rarely more than 30 or 40 yards apart from each other, and I counted 167, when I tired of the task. The petroleum is found generally at the depth of 37 fathoms, the distance rendering the quantity, almost the material itself, totally undistinguishable from the margin. The latest dug well had been pierced to the depth of 70 cubits, when the miners were interrupted by warlike operations; but in ten cubits more they were sure of meeting with the oil. Now again a few people had recommenced labour, but much of the machinery used for drawing up the naptha lay in-

active and neglected. I do not pretend to understand the nature of the machinery; but I saw that to an axle crossing the well was affixed a revolving barrel, a strong thick cord, and a bucket of large dimensions. When the oil is exhausted at a certain depth, the well is deepened by the miners, not abandoned until it becomes really too deep for their labour. We saw some of the petroleum drawn up, which was of a dull green hue, with a powerful, but by no means disagreeable odour. Used for so many domestic purposes, it is also credited for medicinal properties, as an embrocation for bruises, rheumatism, &c., and our modern metropolitan perfumers launch out abundant puffs of the virtues of "petroline soap," in all cutaneous disorders.

A stifling fume ascended with the bucket, as we leant over the tarry sides of the well; and I vainly peered down to see the fluid in its native bath. As I stretched awkwardly over the edge, the depth below, and perhaps the stifling smell, giddied me—I slipped my foot in trying to step back, and fell!—I fell, but providentially my clutching and desperate hands clung to the pitchy sides, while my feet dangled into the depths whence I could feel the heat of the ascending steam. I was afterwards told that this heat was an imagination; and truly I was in just that condition of bodily fear when the mind is apt to form the most hideous conceptions. That I was in imminent danger was certain—the cry of horror that escaped from the workmen, as well as from the few of my companions who had not proceeded farther, did not tend to embolden me; and the shout for "help" that tried to

issue from my lips was arrested there by deathly terror. I saw there was a rushing of people about the well; but I felt that not long could I endure the strain upon my arms; and it seemed to me, that either the congealed matter into which my hands were forced was giving way, or that my finger-nails were actually coming off. Suddenly I heard a shout, and afterwards I was told that it proceeded from Roostum, who, at a well some yards off, had heard the uproar when I fell, and now rushed towards us. In another moment, with a presence of mind the others had not experienced, he shoved the rope, with the bucket attached, towards me; assisted by the miners, who now saw his object, it was lowered until it came beneath my feet, and then he bade me, gently, and as a mother might speak to a child, "fear not, but stand in the bucket, for all was well." I obeyed, and was safely landed, trembling and faint, to receive the embraces of my comrades; but, turning from them to clasp the hand of him to whom I felt I owed my existence, under God, I saw him stagger on the very spot to which so lately my hands had clung, and ere he could spring forwards to clasp my hand, the whole brink of the well for several inches gave way; and with it, before even an eye could twinkle, down he went backwards, down, down into the pitchy mass that creamed invisibly below! I heard one word—"*Allah!*" escape his lips. I heard the sound, remote and hollow, and awful, as his body touched the dense fluid; and then, overcome by the mingled emotions of the last terrible ten minutes, I became insensible. So perished Syed Roostum—the

young, the brave, the beloved! From the moment that he fell, they told me, life was virtually extinct; the first inhalation of the powerful fumes would cause death. Nor was it an unusual circumstance; for many a miner, impelled by cupidity to excavate beyond a prudent depth, had perished from suffocation!

Thus became fulfilled the warning omen—thus, too, dying as he prophetically wished "in my service!"—fell Syed Roostum, never forgotten, never unlamented by him whose life he saved, by prematurely perishing in the promise of his prime!

FIRE-REVELATIONS.

As now within my winter's fire I look,
I seem to see
Pictures and shapes that come to gaze at me,
Like midnight stars from some clear summer brook
O'er which no cloud its mist-lined flag hath shook.

A palace or a prison starts before me,
With battlements
That frown austerely o'er besieging tents,
'Mid which the shadow—Death, stalks red and stormy,
Whirling his lightning banner sternly o'er me.

Faces beloved but passed away, I see—
The beautiful,
Whose hearts, with mine taught in the same fond school,
Brake in that strife which hath but shattered me,
Whose harder nature braves grief's agency.

The beautiful, the dear, the true are there,
The false, likewise;
The false and cruel with their cunning eyes,
Or smiling with a presence insincere,
That but for burning flames would chill all near.

I look on scenes piled in the blazing grate,
Of early days;
My pastoral home, whence first I sought the ways
That lead from passionate love to passionate hate
Thro' the entangling maze of man's estate.

The hills of Scotland and the woods of Ind
Gleam in the glow;
Struggles and strifes, the battle and the brow
Laurelled, but bloody, in the fire I find,
With graves of dear ones 'mid grass-shaking wind!

Scent-eloquent flowers and inarticulate weeds
Before me speak
Pathetic sentences, that nearly break
My heart with memories of such love as leads
Downwards thro' death, where life to death succeeds!

Stir, stir the fire! destroy the spectral strife
That shows the Past:
Give me the NOW—nor let me look aghast
On grieving graves with but the Human rife:—
Onward the future shines, bright with immortal life!

MISS HENNY.

In the old, very clean, not very large, but very dull "borrowstoun," in the north of Scotland, where almost the whole of that educational system which

was intended to fit me for the common arithmetical and grammatical requirements of life was carried on, there was one small street, wider than the others perhaps, which certainly contained houses of a more antique build, amongst which not a shop was to be found, whose fame rested upon the number of ancient unmarried females of a respectable rank in society that resided in it. We wicked urchins of the Grammar School called it Old Maid Street; and, if there was a locality in all N——, that abounded with more modest worth, more genuine charity, more practical usefulness than any other, it was that very street. I affirm this at the outset of my sketch, lest by any chance, fair readers, you should turn from it as containing nothing but a commonplace diatribe against a class of women which I reverence, and in which I have found individuals possessing every feminine endowment that can grace the mind. I have discovered amongst "old maids" such qualifications of intellect—and, where the brightest lights of intellect were wanting, of heart-goodness—as justify almost any amount of praise I may be inclined to lavish on them.

There were actually eleven spinsters in that street, not one of whom was reproached by such condemnatory epithets as are by some considered to be the fitting attributes of the race. People said that, if a twelfth intruded into the charmed circle, the harmony that was known to prevail amongst them would evaporate. Not unlikely, since a straw may light a conflagration; and the first permitted plant of ragwort may fill the farmer's field with many weeds;

but luckily, in my youthful days, the original number remained unaltered. There was not one of these women who could lay claim to the very uninteresting title of "faultless monster;" there was not one who had not a natural freckle on her temper, a human wrinkle on her disposition; there were even one or two—perhaps more—who had fewer beauties than defects in their mental construction; but where will you find the perfectly spotless drift of snow? As soon as it has reached the earth, there will something belonging to that earth mingle with it, either springing from its couch, downfalling from its canopy, or windwafted to it by atmospheric influences.

Amongst them, however, was one who became at a very early stage of my existence an object of peculiar interest to me. Not wholly unmercenary was my predilection for Miss Henny, for she was the dear and consistent friend of my own favourite cousin Jeanie—herself an old maid now, and one who has won love and regard from all who know her by a steady course of usefulness, piety, and benevolence. Besides which, Miss Henny had many ways of winning the affection of a boy whose natural inclinations tended strongly towards the creature comforts of buns, marmalade, and *floury scones* covered with honey. Above all, she had a roomful of books, which she not only loved to read herself, but which she loved to lend to others to read, provided great care was taken of them. Now, I was as fond of reading all sorts of old-fashioned books as I was of feasting on short-bread; and to her I owe my first impressions of nature derived from St. Pierre, my first

worship of ideal harmony gleaned from Spenser; my first serious, but not gloomy, views of religion from Flavel's quaint and gentle pages. I should not forget, that among those books were a few of a description that acted upon my mind with a sort of fascination not altogether wholesome. There were some old black letter romances: Mrs. Radcliffe's "Udolpho," Charlotte Smith's "Solitary Wanderer," Mrs. Roche's "Children of the Abbey," and "Evelina," then actually a new book, at least in our part of the world.

Miss Henny Rose at this time might have been some fifty years of age. In figure she was large, robust, muscular; I used to think she would have made a capital drill-sergeant, she stood so erect, and insisted so strenuously upon every one else doing the same. Her face had no beauty derivable from contour of features; the latter, indeed, were masculine; and a *soupçon* of moustache, which seemed but a shadow of her thick, black eyebrows, began to invade the upper lip of a mouth, somewhat large in itself, but garnished with very white and even teeth and a smile that was very sweet and not unfrequent. Her eyes were black and large: their expression at times was that of intense thoughtfulness; it seemed as if she were looking at something beyond that outward object upon which they were fixed; and, as she sat abstracted in this position, I have watched her from the window-seat, where I used to read of an evening, until my thoughts of what hers might be have startled me. A serious smile was often in those eyes, but it was evident that tears had been no unfamiliar things, though a serene tranquility was their now

general expression. Yet, when aroused by indignation at what she deemed unworthy conduct, I have seen them light up with a fire that betrayed the existence of feelings suppressed but not extinguished. She was without any living relations, having been the only child of a poor but proud Highland gentleman, on whose death she became heiress to some property which brought her in about £100 annually. And truly she was considered rich by many of her sisterhood in the neighbourhood, though to hoard her wealth in bank or coffer was not her forte. She was quietly and judiciously charitable, and the real delight she took in doing good taught her a financial economy not natural to her free and liberal character. Miss Henny's chief self-indulgence was to assemble a party of young folks to what we used to call "a grand tea." A few elderly persons were always there, but the feast was avowedly prepared for her juvenile guests, and it is wonderful how mirthful she became in ministering to the mirth of others, and with what ease she prevented gaiety from degenerating into boisterous romping. And what tea she gave us! Never since have I drunk such tea, not even in that Eastern land, where fresh and fragrant from China, the aroma it exhales, as the caity containing it is opened, perfumes the saloon. Yes, once I drank of "the cup that cheers, but not inebriates," and acknowledged it equal to that of Miss Henny's brewing. It was prepared by Mrs. Leigh Hunt, and sent down to us by her to her husband's study as "tea, just as she used to make it for Keats!"

Then the accessories to Miss Henny's tea were

choice and delicate; the wholesome brown bread sliced and covered with the best, richest, primrose-hued butter of Strathspey, flour scones, hot and well-buttered oaten bannocks, crisp, and sweet with marmalade or honey! Merry games followed our innocent feasts; sometimes, too, a little dance, for an ancient spinnet stood in the room, and there was always some one who could play a reel, or, maybe, a country dance. Sometimes one of the girls would sing old ballads, such as "Barbara Allen," or the "Heir of Lynn;" and sometimes, in the long winter evenings, we would gather round the fire, and listen to such stories as fairly made our young hearts leap within us. We had tales of witch and of warlock, of water-kelpie that sang sweetly on the brown waters of the Nairn till the traveller drew near, when, with discordant shrieks, the fiendish creature "melted awa' 'neath the water, cocking its tail up just like a big skate." We had traditions of haunted cairns, and of Highland raids; of fairies heard on the hill side by the shepherd, who, putting his ear to the roots of the bracken, hears the sound of their voices, and of tasks that tell of the common avocations of life—the pouring of water from pail to pan, the kneading of bannocks, and the whirring of spinning-wheels. There were love stories too; but more about ghosts, and of the *Bodach nan Clockan,* or Old Man in the Mantle, that is known to sit on the gray rocks of Ardclach, and on the moors of Braemoray, though Miss Henny insisted that it was nothing but a monstrous bird. In those modern days poor Miss Henny would have been sorely condemned for encouraging the legendary

lore which followed her cakes and cream. But we took no harm that ever I could discover; and, if I continue to cling to a little belief in the supernatural to this day, I can conscientiously assert that it has at no time caused me the slightest discomfort.

"If I had minded that this was the 1st of August, I should not have invited you here to-night," said Miss Henny, at the breaking up of one of her parties, as she helped my cousin Jeanie on with her cloak; "ye ken what happened to me long ago, my dear? Ay, ay; well, I should be thankful that I have forgotten it mysel'. But God is good! He makes us to remember, and he makes us to forget even as He thinks it is best for us! It was a sore grief to me, many a day, but the guilt of blood, or of the desire to shed it, was never upon my soul. God bless you, bairns, and dinna think o' what I have been saying to Miss Jeanie." The latter part of this speech was addressed to a few young people, who like myself had heard with some wonder the whole of what had been said; nor had we passed her threshold before we began to descant on it, as we followed our senior up the long lane that led past the kirk.

"I should like to know what melancholy occurrence Miss Rose alluded to, as being connected with this day," said I to my companion, a very pretty girl whom I generally contrived to escort home on similar occasions.

"I think I do know," replied Mary Ann; "but boys should never be told such things, they always make fun of them."

"Make fun of what?" cried I; "besides, I am not

such a boy after all. I am to get a cadetship next year, and perhaps when I wear a red jacket—"

"Red jacket, pooh!" said she, rather disdainfully I thought, "it would have been better if Miss Henny had never seen one. Why, it was an officer that she—but I had better hold my tongue."

"Good gracious, Mary Ann! you are quite mysterious to-night. You surely don't mean to say that she murdered a soldier?"

"Well," admitted Mary Ann, "they do say that she somehow killed an officer—he was a real captain; but by all accounts he quite deserved his fate."

I had no time to investigate the claims of the real captain to be slain by lady hands, for we reached our adjoining abodes, and parted for the night. But it was not long before I gathered from my cousin Jeanie the revelation of Miss Rose's history—a simple story, but true, which I shall relate in my own way.

Rose of Roseburn, in Ross-shire, the father of my heroine, had run through a considerable property, in the manner then, as now, peculiar to *fast* men. He had married a woman as extravagantly inclined as himself; and when she died, leaving Henrietta to the care of her husband's sister, it was fortunate for the poor motherless girl that she fell into such excellent hands as those of Mrs. Cameron, who, herself a woman of strong understanding, sincere piety, and practical sense, brought up her neice to be a useful and amiable member of society; so that on her decease, which happened when Henrietta was in her twenty-fifth year, she had the satisfaction of knowing that she had done her duty by the girl, and that the

annuity she had settled upon her was safe, judiciously placed beyond the reach of her reckless brother. Mrs. Cameron had resided for many years at Roseburn, where the influence she exercised over the laird was not without those beneficial results which, more or less, conduct and temper are sure to command. But on her death the frivolous and dissipated habits of the man again broke forth, unrestrained by any feelings of regard for his daughter, who had some difficulty in prevailing upon a maiden relative to come and reside with her, whose presence might in some measure protect her from the society of the troop of lawless and ill-mannered guests whom her father encouraged to spend night and day at the hall. About a year after the death of her aunt, a certain Lieutenant Murdoch was introduced to her by her father, as an officer on furlough from his regiment, then in the Peninsula. Mr. Murdoch was a handsome man, some forty years of age; and how it came to pass nobody knew, but so it was that he became violently smitten with Miss Henny, who, though by no means beautiful, possessed comeliness, good nature, and good sense. In after days, Miss Henny was wont to declare that her heart never fully responded to a warmth of affection, which was yet flattering, if not appreciated; but circumstances threw them together; and, believing that he was the most respectable and best behaved of her father's associates, she at last consented to become his wife in the course of two years, provided nothing occurred in the meantime to alter her favourable opinion. Murdoch professed himself satisfied, as he owned that, for a year or two, his means would not enable him to marry.

His stay in Ross-shire lasted six months after they had come to this understanding; but, long before he went away, circumstances had occurred to strengthen Henrietta's conviction that she had acted prudently in postponing the certain promise of her hand. Reports reached her of the former life of dissipation led by Murdoch; and she was dissuaded from ever fulfilling her engagement by insinuations that insanity prevailed in his family. To these whispers Henrietta turned a deaf ear, but she could not conceal from herself that of late the lieutenant had become the inseparable companion of her father in all his wildest escapades. They spent weeks together at Inverness, whence they were sure to return with empty purses and tarnished reputations. They played billiards or cards incessantly, and drank whiskey punch until each night ended in noisy intoxication; and at length they took to fox-hunting in their cups, till one afternoon, after a mad scamper over heath and hill, Mr. Rose was brought home senseless from a fall, from the effects of which he never recovered.

Leaving a penitential letter, replete with such promises as none are so ready to make as men who contemplate no reform, Murdoch left Roseburn for Inverness, whence he speedily departed to join his regiment. Henrietta read the plethora of protestations with a cold heart and a contemptuous lip; she felt that she had never loved the man, and cared not to think of him. Her father died within a few weeks after the accident, and, but for the generous precautions of Mrs. Cameron, Henrietta would have been almost a beggar. Her father died insolvent, Rose-

burn was hers no longer, and before the year was over, fresh disclosures and discoveries were made of the utter profligacy of the absent lieutenant, which induced her to despatch a letter to him, putting a complete end to all matrimonial speculations between them. In the course of time she heard that his relations in Inverness had received intelligence of his promotion, but that he had been compelled to sell out. Habits of inebriety had become so frequent that he was advised to quit the army, as the only means of escape from impending expulsion by court-martial; a severe wound in the head, received in action and whilst gallantly encouraging his advancing men, entitled him to some degree of favour, and he was allowed to sell his commission. He came home—a total wreck! and his relatives ascribed his dissolute habits, which they termed eccentricity, to insanity; but the truth of the matter was, that he was a confirmed drunkard. There is a class of pseudo-benevolent apologists for vice, who rank all vices as proofs of insanity: it is a false and dangerous theory, for insanity is a disease of the *intellectual* nature; whereas vice, having no taint of the insane, is wholly evidence of *moral* disorder.

Henrietta Rose had retired with her aged relative to a neat little cottage near Dingwall, and a most unwelcome visitor there was Captain Murdoch! He denied having received her letter, and urged his suit with an indelicate obstinacy that would listen to no word of denial or rebuke. Resolutely and civilly Henrietta acquainted him with her full cognizance of his misconduct, and declaring that she neither

loved nor esteemed him, requested him to withdraw. The scene that ensued was terrible. Murdoch retired a few hours, but returned in such a state of frantic intoxication that Miss Rose was obliged to summon the assistance of some men who were working in the fields near her cottage, and it was only by force that he was ejected from her disturbed dwelling. In the greatest alarm of repeated intrusion she accepted the invitation of a worthy minister, whose manse, situated in a wild hilly country, was some miles from Dingwall, and here she and her cousin owed the enjoyment of several tranquil weeks to the hospitality of her host and his wife.

But the time was close at hand when tranquillity was to be dispelled. One fine forenoon in early August, Miss Henny, who had been walking with the minister through his corn-fields—beginning to yellow in the late harvest of Ross-shire—left him at a little bothy in the glen, where a sick parishioner claimed his kind offices, whilst she pursued her way up a steep rocky path that led to a mountain cairn, said to be the last resting-place of a celebrated robber who there met his death in the olden time. Henny had not hitherto visited this spot, where Mr. Matheson promised to join her, and she had reached it, and sat herself down to rest her limbs wearied with the ascent, whilst she admiringly surveyed the extent of wild and romantic country visible from her exalted position. The cairn was nothing but a huge accumulation of gray stones, singularly enough placed on a jutting corner of the rock, which in this place was completely bare of vegetation, though beneath it ver-

dure flourished rankly at a great depth, nurtured by the irrigation of a brown hill stream which no summer's heat had power to drink up. Opposite the cairn, across the narrow glen or ravine, there was a long stretch of steep cliff-land—not so high, indeed, as the promontory on which Henrietta rested herself, but shaggy with turfted shrubs and hazel trees laden with ripening nuts. Along the sides of these braes ran a little track that led as well as the steeper path by which she had ascended to the cairn, extending laterally behind it and diverging thence into several branches. As Henny sat there, she was aware of a movement among the hazels on the opposite ridge, and presently saw a figure emerge from the coppice, in which, however, it again disappeared. She thought no more of it, concluding it to be some peasant looking for early nuts, and had, indeed, reverted to meditations that were seldom idle or selfish, when a loud laugh behind her, and the tramp of feet, and then the pressure of rude hands on her shoulders, frightened her into the utterance of a shrill cry, reiterated when she found herself held by Murdoch, his eyes inflamed by drink or delirium, his dress in ragged disorder, and his hands and face distorted by filth and neglect.

After the first intensity of her terror had in some degree subsided, finding that her struggles to release herself were in vain, she endeavoured to soothe him by gentle entreaties; but he continued to laugh the idiotic laugh of drunkenness, as he insisted on carrying her down the cliff in his arms.

"You are now my bride," said he; "you break no more promises with me, for if you do not let me

carry you now to the minister down there to be married, I swear to you that I'll jump with you in my arms down from the cairn to the glen!"

And as he spoke, he lifted her in his arms, till she shuddered lest he should indeed be tempted to put his threat into execution.

At that moment a shot was fired at no great distance, and Murdoch's grasp relaxed for a moment. In the next, Henrietta had extricated herself at the expense of her dress, a portion of which remained in his hand. Staggering wildly from him, she sprang across the ledge of the cliff on which rested the outward part of the cairn, and found herself in a position so perilous that her brain whirled as she gazed around her. In advance of her, at a very few paces distance, the path ended abruptly in a mass of slaty perpendicular cliff, which she could neither ascend nor pass; below her descended the bare sheet of rock, at least sixty feet; the cairn divided her from her assailant, and already he was near at hand, for, as she stood panting on the narrow space which lay between her and destruction, he appeared at the top of the cairn, and in another moment was again beside her.

As he laughed loudly, pointing to the opposite ridge of hazel, Henrietta's eyes fell upon the form of Mr. Matheson, and she uttered a cry for help. He was proceeding slowly to join her by the track across the glen which conducted to the cairn through the hazel copses. He heard her cry, and saw her situation; but the circuitous nature of the path would prevent him from reaching her in less than ten minutes, and in ten minutes what might not happen?

But he hurried on, whilst a fearful struggle commenced on that dangerous mountain-side. Henrietta was robust and muscular, and, in repelling Murdoch's attempt to seize her round the waist, clutched his right wrist with a force so convulsive, that, his feet at the same time coming against a block of rugged slate, he slipped and fell on his knees, dragging her down with him, until her head almost rested on his shoulder. As they thus wrestled, both panting, both silent, two other individuals appeared on the spot so recently occupied by the minister, and the spectacle they beheld seemed to rivet them in terror to the ground they stood on. They beheld what Murdoch himself had no cognizance of; they saw that he knelt on the very brink of the precipice, to which his back was turned, and down which glared the terrified eyes of Henrietta, in full consciousness of their impending doom. At that instant one of these spectators, impelled by some impulse, and in opposition to the desire of his comrade, raised his fowling-piece, and, levelling at the cairn directly above where Murdoch and his victim crouched, discharged it with a loud report, which then, as before, had the effect of loosening Murdoch's grasp. Suddenly withdrawing her hold of his wrist, she pushed him from her with her whole force, and fell back herself, insensible, on the rock. Fortunate insensibility! for it saved her from the fate which awaited Murdoch, whose left arm, shaken from her by the weight with which she came to the ground, was no longer linked with her body. He started on his feet, the better to regain his hold of her, but, heedless to the chasm behind him, stepped back, and—*fell!*

When they came to look for him they found but his body—a shattered and formless mass!

Henrietta was conveyed, in a deep swoon, by Mr. Matheson and the two gentlemen, who happened to be neighbours, to the manse, where for many days a violent brain fever threatened her life. But she recovered, as we know, although for months, nay, years, she was afflicted with a deep melancholy, which yielded at length to time and the pious reasonings of kind and judicious friends. She became at last convinced that she was no murderess; and, learning the true uses of affliction, that it is sinful to forget our duties to others in our indulgence of selfish sorrows, she became gradually the cheerful, charitable, busy, and helpful Christian we all loved so well.

Dear Miss Henny was eighty-four years of age when a short illness carried her off; but she retained her senses to the last, submissively enduring the pains of a severe agony, and resting with a cheerful faith on the consolations of a creed which fortifies us in weakness and soothes us in sorrow.

WHAT HAPPENED AT CHERRY-TREE TOPPING.

It is strange—nor is the observation a new one—how certain localities become subject, as it were, to certain analogous events; just as in some families a disease may appear to be hereditary, or a predisposition to peculiar eccentricities continue to show itself for several centuries. I remember an elm-tree near the good town of Taunton, in passing near which so

many of our acquaintances had somehow chanced to sprain an ancle, that we gave it the name of the Twistfoot-tree. In like manner I have to relate a series of somewhat romantic facts which took place at the old farmhouse of Cherry-tree Topping, in Somerset, where I was born, where I afterwards became a wife, and where I have since lived many years a widow, with my good kind children and grandchildren around me.

I had no part in the first event of which I have chosen to be the narrator. It occurred before I was born, but was frequently the subject of conversation at our fireside, where my excellent father took great delight in placing it before my mental view in the shape of a warning against what he was inclined to consider as one of the greatest faults in the female character—that nervous timidity which, from the most frivolous causes, induces young women to faint, and shriek, and give way to ridiculous paroxysms of fear, that are sometimes the result of constitutional weakness, but oftener conventional and affected, and then assuredly calling for no sympathy.

It seems that before my father leased the farm of Cherry-tree Topping, a burglary, attended by fatal circumstances, had been committed in the house. The then resident, a Mr. Roby, was an elderly man, accounted wealthy, but of no generous or charitable disposition, though overpartial to the indulgences of the table, and ostentatious in the display of furniture and household luxuries that were justly deemed unsuitable to his condition. His wife was dead, and two daughters composed his family. Educated in

that faulty and foolish manner which, by the substitution of superficial and imperfectly acquired accomplishments for substantially useful qualifications, unfits the respectable yeoman's daughter for the station she was born to dignify and ornament, those poor girls had passed a few years at a third-rate boarding-school, where they were taught to smatter imperfect French, to play the pianoforte, for which they had no taste, and to manufacture such ornamental work as neither practically nor æsthetically served to enlarge their capacities for utility, or expand their intellects. The consequences were obvious. Returned to their father's house, they were unfit to manage it, and the conduct of the establishment devolved upon a clever but dishonest upper-servant; whilst their time was swallowed up in a hundred frivolous details, which added neither to their charms as women, nor to their respectability amongst their neighbours. Mr. Roby grumbled at their extravagance, but his vulgar pride reconciled him to a display of his wealth; nor was it until the elopement of his youngest daughter with a reckless young dancing-master at Taunton, who reckoned on receiving a pardon and a portion from the parent of his bride, that he began to question the merits of his own management. The change in his disposition from indifference to querulous tyranny did not mend matters; and when, after a short season of hardship and poverty, his till then unforgiven child was restored to him a widow, she found a household that had been altered, but had not been reformed in her absence.

It was at this time the burglary took place. On a Sabbath night, when the servants had retired, and when Mr. Roby, after an ample supper, sat half stupified over a third tumbler of strong punch, while his daughters were individually devouring the pages of a novel, a loud noise was heard in the room beneath the drawing-room in which they were seated. This chamber, miscalled the study, contained not only the plate, but the escritoire in which old Roby's cash was treasured. The girls, terrified out of all self-possession by the scarcely mistakable sounds below, started up, screaming louldly for that assistance they had not judgment to look for in themselves; and wakening the old man from his inebriated stupor, vainly called upon him for defence. Men in white frocks, with their faces blackened, burst in upon them, with many oaths, demanding the keys of chest and coffer. Mr. Roby, rising in terrified wrath, was struck down by one of the burglars; while his eldest daughter ran shrieking about the room in the imbecile hysteria of terror; and the other, selfishly regardless of aught but her own personal safety, managed to escape from the scene, and lay hid in the coal-cellar, until she was found some hours after the house-breakers had retreated with their booty.

On Miss Roby's recovery from her fit of terror, she found her father lifeless on the floor; but not staying to render him assistance, she rushed from the house, and finding her way to the offices, succeeded at last in rousing some of the men-servants. Mr. Roby was quite dead; there was no mark of violence on his person; and it was just as probable that a fit,

occasioned by fright when so suddenly roused from inebriated slumbers, had extinguished the spark of life, as that he had been killed by the blow of the robber, which his married daughter declared she had witnessed. The burglars were never discovered; but it is a fact that the woman, who had so completely ruled the domestic economy of the family, disappeared soon after, having thrown up her situation when it became no longer desirable to retain it.

Now, my father was accustomed to ascribe all the misfortunes that befell the Robies to pride and self-indulgence in the parent, and want of mental culture in the children. "These women," he would say, "might have saved life and property, if they had been properly educated into that self-reliance which teaches us not only to defend ourselves, but to help others.—Now, Nelly"—turning to me—"had I been asleep in that chair, with you beside me, and such a crew breaking into the house, what would you have done?"

"But, father," I would reply, "you do not get tipsy; and if such a thing were to happen, I fear I should be very much frightened; but, at the same time"——

"Well?"

"At the same time, I should certainly not leave you to their tender mercies, or hide myself in the coal-hole; and I am very sure that I could control myself sufficiently to prevent all noisy evidence of my alarm. I never fainted in my life; and you and my mother have taught me better things than to scream at the sight of a mouse or a black beetle. I did not even start yesterday, when I *almost* put my hand upon a toad in the garden."

"But would you stand quietly by, and permit the sideboard to be rifled without a struggle?"

"Nay, father, I should ring the bell if possible, or up poker and at them," said I smiling: "besides, there is a pistol in the study, if I could get at it."

"Yes—a pistol without a lock, and in want of cleaning. But it shall be looked to, girl; and, what is more, you shall be taught how to use it. I do not wish to make either a racing sportsman or a hare-hunting sharp-shooter of my daughter, but I see no reason why she should not learn how to prime a pistol—ay, and fire it, too, if need were."

My mother never interfered in such matters as the above, for she knew that my father had a good reason for most of his resolves; and though I shrunk a little at first from the lesson, I did not try to avert it. I little thought, some weeks afterwards, when he complimented me on my prowess, that I should ever level a pistol at anything less brittle than a black bottle, or more lively than a log of wood!

* * * *

I have not yet told you, that within half a mile of us rose the old, gray, substantial walls of the manor-house of the Lesters. The family, an ancient one, though no longer rich, had long been patrons of ours. My mother was the foster-sister of Lady Lester, and foster-mother to her second son, Frank. But of this second son I had, up to this time, heard little. My eldest brother, whose place at my mother's breast he had taken, had long been dead, and Frank might now have been nearly thirty years of age. I afterwards came to learn, that for misconduct of

more than common baseness he had been discarded by his family, his father having settled a certain annuity on him, provided he lived abroad. At home, his reckless extravagance and dishonourable habits had exhausted the pity or affection of all save his mother: she, with many vain attempts to alter a course of life which seemed prompted by an innate love of vice, at length was obliged to content herself with lavishing upon him all the little cash she could spare; and when, on his father's death, his brother succeeded to the family estates, she made an unavailing attempt to bring about a reconciliation between her sons. Indeed, her partiality for the unworthy Frank amounted to infatuation. She submitted to his exactions, that were not even harbingered by any display of filial tenderness, until Sir George found himself called upon peremptorily to interfere; and the result was, a serious quarrel with his mother, which the friends of the family found it impossible to adjust. The dispute ended in Lady Lester's leaving the manor-house for Cherry-tree Topping, where she prevailed upon my parents to allot a suite of rooms for her use until such time as her health enabled her to remove elsewhere.

This took place nearly two years after I had acquired the accomplishment of shooting at a mark. To make room for Lady Lester's attendant, I was sent on a visit to an aunt who resided in London. I was the god-daughter of this excellent relative, who had long wished me to reside with her, and I submitted the more cheerfully to the wishes of my parents because of my knowledge of her wise and

amiable character. I spent two years with her, proving a useful companion to one who had no other in the world nearer of kindred than my father; and it appeared that, owing to declining health and a disinclination for any change, Lady Lester still continued to reside at the farm. A reconciliation had been effected between herself and the baronet, but she declined living at the manor-house, where, in truth, it is not likely that her presence was desired. Unfortunately her weak, not to say sinful indulgence of her younger son—her compliance, as far as it could go, with his constant demands upon her purse, suffered no diminution; and the respectful interference of my parents had no other effect than irritating her into displeasure, which ended in accesses of severe indisposition. More than once, returning for a time to England, Frank Lester had dared to intrude upon his mother, whom he never left until by menaces of self-destruction he had succeeded in extorting money from her. On one occasion, when in fact she was unable to comply with his requisitions, and when my mother remonstrated with her foster-son on his cruel and unfilial conduct, he insulted them both so grossly, that my father, happening to come in at the time, thrust him out of the house, declaring he should never enter it again.

About this time my good old aunt expired, leaving me mistress of all her humble savings, and I was summoned home. I found no alterations there, saving in the presence of Lady Lester and the absence of my eldest sister, who had recently married. The fragile appearance and gentle disposition of Lady

Lester interested me deeply. Her almost childlike dependence on all who surrounded her, aroused my natural desire to make myself useful to the sick or sad; and I became by degrees her constant companion—reading to her, working beside her, administering to her ailments, and listening to the recitals of her happier days, which it was an indulgence to her to repeat to so eager an auditor.

In her details there was one reservation, which, knowing the state of affairs, I sought not to remove: she never mentioned Frank but as the beautiful and clever boy whom my mother had nursed. One day his arrival was announced, after an absence of many months, during which time, however, it appears that more than once small sums of money had been transmitted to him by his mother. My father was absent, or he might have refused admittance to one who, it seems, had often insulted him for a straightforward condemnation of his conduct; but in the breast of his foster-mother still lingered an advocate, and he was ushered into the apartments of Lady Lester. I did not see him, for I was engaged in some domestic matter, from which, however, I was erelong summoned by loud cries and the ringing of a bell. I found Lady Lester in violent hysterics, and my mother so much alarmed as to be incapable of rendering her any assistance. I succeeded, however, in restoring the agitated dowager to some degree of tranquillity, when she confessed that Frank had forced from her all the ready money she possessed at the time; nay, more, had threatened to destroy himself if she did not promise to provide him with £300

in a few days. "He knows," she said, "that in that time I shall receive a sum equal to that amount; but his words were so cruel, his menaces so inhuman, that I have at length taken your husband's advice: I refused to give it. I have sworn to give him no more for a year, nor will I see him till then. I believe he would have struck me, had you not come in."

On my father's return, we told him all that had occurred; but he seemed to think that, having failed in his object, there was no danger to be apprehended from a repetition of Frank's visits for some time, or until he had soothed his indulgent parent by apologies and concessions. Nor, indeed, did we hear of him for several weeks.

How well do I remember the bright glory of that genial day, whose close was to be darkened by my first sight of Frank Lester. I had seen my father mount his horse and ride away to B——, whence he warned us not to look for his return before a late hour; and as I sauntered back from the gate where I had shaken hands with him, my eyes drank in with rare delight the soft quiet beauty of the scene before me. The farmhouse, which was closely imbosomed in a grove of the exuberant cherry-trees, from which it derived its name, had no near prospect of agricultural processes or labour, and there was a look of substantial yet graceful antiquity about it, that consorted well with the serenity of the weather. Round every casement and lattice, and winding about and over an ample bower-like porch, ran roses, jessamines, and honeysuckles, profusely covered with flowers in

every stage of bloom, amidst which the bees and butterflies hummed and sported. On the green lawn, smoothly shorn, before the windows of the parlour and the drawing-room above it, which was devoted to our inmate, sported a favourite cat and kitten; whilst every cherry-tree, richly clothed in green leaf and white blossom, wafted fragrance around, that might well be termed incense waved forth from censers of emerald by snowy hands.

We had passed the day pleasantly, and twilight found me in Lady Lester's bedroom, which was on the same floor as the drawing-room, though separated from it by a passage. It was a richly-furnished apartment of considerable size, for she had had some favourite pieces of furniture removed to it from the manor. Near the bed, with its back to a window, stood a richly-carved antique chair, my usual seat as I read to her when she lay down. Opposite, and to the left of the door, before which stood a handsome screen, was a costly cabinet and escritoire, in which she kept her papers and valuables; a picture or two on the wall, through which opened a small dressing-room, the entrance closed by a pall of ancient arras. The house was wonderfully silent, for the kitchen department was quite at the back, and shut out from us by a long corridor. As the dusk deepened, and I lit the candles, I almost fancied the house uninhabited, save by ourselves, for my mother was busy in the laundry, and the only sound that found its way through the open doors, was the twittering of the small birds among the trees. I had read to Lady Lester until she had passed off into a light slumber,

when I lay back in the chair to continue my lecture to myself. Presently I was disturbed by hearing on the staircase footsteps, which anon seemed to stop and again to retire. In the belief that it was my mother, I got up, and stealing softly to the door, addressed her in a low voice. There was no answer; and then all at once I remembered that she had desired me to bring her a bunch of lavender which lay on a table in the drawing-room. I ran across the passage for it, found it readily without any other light than that which poured in dimly and quaintly from the fine clear night-sky, and hastened to the laundry with it. As I passed the outer door, which I recollected having left open, it struck me that some person must have passed by, for it was now ajar, and there was no wind that could have forced it into this position. I shut it, without drawing bolt or bar; but as I left the laundry, having accomplished my task, I asked my mother if she had been near the staircase, or sent anybody thither, for I fancied that I had heard footsteps. She replied in the negative. "Silly child," she added laughing, "it was your friend Puss, who has been teaching her kitten all manner of noisy tricks." I left her, and had reached the end of the passage that led to the staircase, when I heard loud voices. Lady Lester was speaking angrily, yet the tremor of her voice evinced fear. In a moment, I conjectured what was really the case—that her unworthy son had found his way to her in my absence; it was he who had stolen into the house in the dusk; it was he who had partly closed the door, and whose footsteps I had heard on the stairs.

My heart beat fast as I listened. What course ought I to pursue? Should I run to my mother? Perhaps it would have been better if I had done so. I heard him say that he must have money—every shilling she had about her; if she refused, he would make her repent it. I heard such cruel words, such harsh accents, as no man should accost a woman with, still less a son address to a mother. I began to tremble, for I heard him demand her keys; and then I heard them rattle, and a gasping cry—and then all was still. In another moment I was at the bedroom door, still open; I stole within it, crouching behind the screen, from which I had a distinct view of what was going on. A man, his back towards the door, was trying to open the escritoire; but his hand trembled with terror or remorse, and he swore fiercely as he forced the unwilling lock. Lady Lester lay back on her pillow in a swoon, or dead. Upon the chair I had occupied, on the very volume I had been reading, lay a pistol. I know not how I came to do it; but I did it. Before he had quite wrenched asunder the lock of the escritoire, I had seized the pistol, unseen, unheard; I retreated with it to the sceen, and then I gave utterance to my indignation in a loud cry. Whether the words I uttered were an appeal for help, or a shout of uncontrollable condemnation, I cannot tell; but I never shall forget the horrible expression of the face that turned towards me in startled wonder as well as rage.

"Dare not, for your life, touch what is there!" I said.

A hideous smile crossed his features as he sprang

towards the chair. I do not think that until then he became cognizant of my having gained possession of his weapon. He uttered a fearful oath. "Idiot!" he cried, "give up that pistol instantly."

"If you advance a step, I fire," was my answer, as I cocked the pistol.

There was a noise from the bed—the gasp of returning animation; there was a noise from the stairs behind me; but as he sprang upon me, I discharged the weapon. The room was then to me a scene of mystery and confusion. There were cries which I did not utter; there was a body extended at my feet; there were a woman's arms about its neck; and I lost all sense and sight, all consciousness except that of being carried away by hands that were unknown to me.

A very brief explanation will suffice to clear away the clouds that may chance to linger about the scene which has just been described. My father's return was some hours earlier than had been anticipated, and yet he did not arrive one moment too soon. About six miles from ——, he had come up with a young medical practitioner of his acquaintance, who had been summoned to attend a neighbour of ours, suddenly seized with apoplexy. My father rode with him to the house of Mr. B——, where they were met by a physician from Taunton, who told them all was over. Death had relieved the sufferer, and they who came to administer such relief as life can bestow were no longer needed. My father invited his young friend, Dr. Reveley, to step home with him to supper, and they had opened the outer door at the

very moment when the report of firearms alarmed the whole household. If I had boasted of an incapacity to faint some years before, I could no longer lay claim to such an exemption from the weakness of my sex, for my father entered the room just in time to receive me senseless in his arms. But exigencies more serious than mine called for assistance, and the presence of Dr. Reveley was no unprized advantage.

Frank Lester, wounded as he was, struggled desperately to release himself from the enfolding arms of his mother, and had dashed her roughly from him, when the entrauce, one after another, of every member of the family then at home, prevented him from effecting his escape. Too surely the pistol had been loaded, and with ball—for what object none ever asked, so far as I know. Too surely had my aim done justice to my early practice; for the first and second fingers of his right hand had been so nearly shot away, that Mr. Reveley found it absolutely necessary to amputate the mangled remnants.

Lady Lester, in a state of agitation that amounted to frenzy, was at length pacified by the doctor's assurances that her son's life was in nowise endangered; and that son, conveyed to a remote apartment, where he submitted without a word to the requisite operation, was left to ruminate on his conduct, until the pity of my mother drew her from other cares to sit by his bedside.

I was not chidden by my father for what had happened, but my own feelings were not so tranquil. Not even the avowed admiration of my conduct testified by the doctor, when he came to know all,

sufficed to satisfy me as to what had resulted from my rashness. Time has, however, convinced me that I was a humble instrument in the hand of Providence. It is impossible to tell by what chinks and crannies the light may first enter upon the darkened soul; but it is very certain that the occurrences of that night had a most salutary effect on the mind of Frank Lester. When, after a few days, he was admitted to the chamber of his suffering parent to receive her forgiveness, my mother described his remorse and anguish as painful yet sweet to be witnessed; and when afterwards my father placed before him a vivid picture, not only of what he had done of evil, but of what he had intended to do, and the probable results of such actions had they been permitted, he betrayed feelings that, latent too long, promised an amended future.

Letters were addressed by his mother to her elder son, and details entered into which happily terminated in Frank Lester's being sent abroad in a capacity where opportunities were available for entering upon a different sort of existence from that which had stained his early manhood. But the chastening hand fell upon him before he left us. His mother's constitution, never strong, was so shaken by that night's fearful occurrence, that she did not live more than a week after learning that she had succeeded in obtaining a permanent situation for him. I had not seen him since the accident; but when at last I was summoned to his dying mother's side, and looked upon the pale, haggard face of that man as he knelt by her bed, and at her request told me that he not only for-

gave but blessed me for the act I had committed, I turned away shuddering, and in tears that I did not attempt to conceal.

Many years passed: my father, my mother, were taken from me in turn, but not before they had given me away in marriage to Dr. Reveley. We were prosperous for many years; but at length the tide of fortune turned, and with four children to provide for we found ourselves fast sinking into abject poverty. When things were at their worst, a letter reached me from a celebrated lawyer at B——, informing me that, by the recent decease of Frank Lester, Esq., &c., at ——, I became entitled to an annuity of £400, which was bequeathed "to Helen Marriott, the wife of Robert Reveley, &c., by one whom she had been the means, through Divine Providence, of having prevented from committing a great crime." From public rumour, we learned that Frank Lester, who died an elderly man, had lived a life of practical usefulness in the station which he honourably held abroad, and from whence he had never returned to England.

UNDER THE PALMS.

Under the Palm-trees on India's shore
Ne'er shall I wander at morning or eve;
Hearts there have withered, but still in the core
Of mine springs the memory of feelings that give
Green thoughts in sunshine and bright hopes in gloom;
Friendship, which love's loud emotions becalms:
Oh, happy was I, in those bowers of perfume,
Under the Palms!

Go forth, little Children! the wood's insect-hum
Invites ye; expand there, like buds in the sun;
Leave schools and their studies for days that *will* come,
And let thy first lesson from Nature be won!
Teachings hath Nature most sage and most sweet—
The music that swells in the tree-linnet's psalms;
So taught, my young heart learned to prize that retreat
Under the Palms!

The odour of Jasmines afloat on the breeze,
That woke in the dawning the birds on each bough;
The frolicsome Squirrels, that scampered at ease
'Mid light leaves and soft moss commingled below:
Heaps piled up of Mangoes, all fragrant and rich,—
Guavas pink-cored, such a wealth of sweet alms
Presented by bright maids, whose meet songs bewitch
Under the Palms!

Pale yellow Bananas, with satiny pulp
That tastes like some dainty of sugar and cream;
Blithe-kernelled Pomegranates, just gathered to help
A feast fit to serve in the bowers of a dream!
Milk, foaming and snowy,—rice, swelling and sweet,
Iced sherbet that cools, and spiced ginger that warms;
Oh, simple our banquet in that dear retreat
Under the Palms!

A tinkling of lutes and a toning of voices,
Of young virgin voices, just fresh from the bath;
A sprinkling of rosewater cool, that rejoices
The scented grass screening our bower from the path;

Trim baskets of Melons, new gathered, beside
Fair bunches of blossoms that heal all sick qualms;
And books, when to reading our fancies subside,
Under the Palms!

Or silence at eve when the sun hath gone down,
Or the sound of *one* cithern makes melody near,
While a beautiful Boy, that hath ne'er known a frown,
Softly murmurs some tale of the East in the ear:
Of Peris, that cluster round flower-stalks like fruits—
Of Genii, that breathe amid blossoms and balms—
Of gazelle-eyed Houris, that play on sweet lutes,
Under the Palms!

Of Roses, that nightly unfold their flower-leaves
To welcome the lays of their loved Nightingales—
Of Spirits, that home in an Eden of Eves
Where the sun never scorches, the strength never fails!
So singing, so playing, Sleep steals on us all,
Enclasping us gently within her soft arms:—
Let me dream that the moonbeams still over me fall
Under the Palms!

AN EPISODE IN MONKEY-LIFE.

I have had some experience of what a jungle-life in India is, and cannot therefore ignore a certain amount of familiarity with a class of animals which, from the days of Eve's temptation, has acquired a character for cunning, malignity, and spite, from which its aspect—at times, indeed, the very beauty

of ugliness—by no means exonerates it. Emblems of the revolting and the terrible have serpents always been, and yet who can deny that a certain singular fascination belongs to them, which renders the slenderest details about them strangely interesting, even to those who regard them with utter abhorrence? Not only in the kingdom of Snakedom have I freely wandered, without, alas! having acquired that magical masterdom over the reptile race of which George Borrow naturally boasts, but I have also had some ongoings with the monkey-tribe; and the other day, as I was hunting up a parcel of old manuscript journals for some records of my ancient soldiership, I came upon a page or two that contained anecdotal reminiscences of facts which I had myself witnessed in reference to both snake and monkey, of sufficient singularity to warrant publication. Let it not be supposed that I am a naturalist, a scientific judge of the creatures of the woods, be they crawlers or catamounts, mice or monkeys. I intend simply to relate what fell under my own observation, without pretending to describe classically, or even to classify methodically, the peculiar races to which the individuals of my text belonged. A soldier from early youth, rudely trained in camp and cantonment, I was far more eager to study the *gazels* and *rekhtas* of the love-sick Hindoo poets, as chanted by the sweet-voiced dancing-girls of the Deccan, than to acquire even a superficial knowledge of that useful branch of natural history which would have taught me to distinguish at sight a poisonous from a harmless reptile, a useful and edible from an unwholesome or deleterious vegetable.

Many years ago, in the year 1823, I happened to be with my regiment—a battalion of Madras native infantry—on the march from Bangalore, in Mysore, to Kulladghee, in the Doab. We had reached the hill-forts of Badaumy, in the province of Bejapoor, where we halted for a day; and at any place more strikingly picturesque we had not stopped during the three hundred and odd miles we had traversed. Yet it has curiously escaped the observation and description of which it is worthy: as far as I know, the only mention of Badaumy on record are the few lines in *Hamilton's Gazetteer*, that give it a lat. 16° 6′ N., a long. 75° 46′ E., and term it a place of some strength, which can be taken only by a regular siege, which would require a heavy equipment. To this scanty and vague account I will only add, that not only from its position, on and among strangely shaped mountains, and the capabilities it possesses, and which have been taken advantage of by the Mahrattas, as a fortified station; but likewise from its being a noted stronghold of Hindoo idols, in caves and temples, and mysterious crypts, reached only by winding subterranean stairs and passages cut through the cliffs, it deserves a close survey and scrutiny from some individual willing and able to describe, fully and truthfully, the place and the marvels it contains.

I have never witnessed the wonders of Elora or Elephanta, but though on a diminished scale, the *lions* of Badaumy are of the same nature, and compel admiration from the least enthusiastic observer. The hill-forts themselves, comprising two different

sides or peaks of the same mountain-ridge in whose recesses the small town is built, are specimens of what art can do when nature has prepared the foundation for its labours. At the very top of the steepest precipice, a pool of excellent water supplies that element from sources which no amount of heat has ever exhausted; and down in the narrow valley, amongst the houses of the village, a large and well-built *talab*, or tank, of delicious water—cool and wholesome, though of a bright smaragdus green—affords unfailing refreshment. On each side of this pond are houses or gardens, and over two ends of this mountain-gap lour the twin fortalices, opposite each other—the highest precipice, called Runmundle, being grotesque in shape, and terrific in gloomy grandeur. Encamped outside the town, no sooner had night descended upon us, ere the reports we had heard of the number of sacred monkeys that abounded in the neighbourhood were confirmed. Had we reached the place at night, ignorant of this fact, we might have concluded that we had fallen upon some terrible Armageddon, haunted by rebellious ghouls and afrits in venomous conflict; for from every peak and jutting promontory arose such a discord of monkey-voices, as, in other circumstances, one would have been only too ready to ascribe to diabolic agencies. Yells, shrieks, hootings, indescribably wild, detained us as if by a spell for more than an hour; and presently when the moon rose, we could distinguish the imp-like creatures springing from tree to rock, and from stone to stone, up among the cliffs, and, as we supposed, exercising some warlike evolu-

tions, or engaged in some fierce gala of animal life, until by dint of observation we really came to think they had got up a dramatic representation for our peculiar amusement. We were afterwards informed, that the opposite ridges of the mountains were severally occupied by two distinct families or clans of of monkeys—the very Montagues and Capulets of the order *Simiæ*—between whom reigned a perpetual feud, which often terminated in blood and death.

Some months after our arrival at Kulladghee, I applied for a few weeks' leave; which being granted, I resolved to revisit Badaumy. I reached it at a season when the surrounding country was arrayed in the brighest livery of summer; and in addition to the attractions supplied by the wild windings and subterranean passages to the hill-forts, with the cavernous temples in the rocks, containing the whole Hindoo Pantheon in beautifully carved images of an amazing size, I found great pleasure in traversing the jungles around, climbing the rocks, and penetrating into the ravines, in search of plants and wild-berries, whose nature and native names were revealed to me by my faithful Mussulman moonshee, or teacher, who had consented to accompany me. To this truly excellent man, Noor-ood-Deen, I owe my first introduction to the art of simple-gathering; and in after-days, during a campaign, when the addition of a single wholesome vegetable to our wretched meals became a rare luxury, I had reason to remember with gratitude that his advice and teachings had suggested the utility as well as lovableness of the study of botany.

He taught me likewise to observe the habits of those very monkeys, whose noctunal orgies had startled us on our first arrival at Badaumy, as well as to distinguish the speckled gray and white tree-snake, which is so fatal, from the spotted brown and green one, which haunts the same bowery recesses, yet is harmless. He told me that venomous serpents are generally marked by a greater width of cerebral formation behind, which gives to the neck the appearance of being smaller that it really is; and he warned me to beware of dark and briery paths, where the track of snails was discernible—such being a sure indication of the vicinity of snakes. From him I learned, that some of the deadliest when taken unawares, roll themselves up spirally, the head elevated, when suddenly uncoiling, they spring forward on their disturber, man or beast, with surprising velocity. Strange things he related of the *dawa*, or revengeful feeling, retained by the cobra di capello against any individual who has pursued, or tried to kill it; and of the odd antagonistic feeling of the ape against the cock, the serpent, and the apparently harmless tortoise. A monkey has, indeed, a ridiculous horror of the latter; and I have often tested its more legitimate terror of the viper, by enclosing one in a *chatty*, or earthern-pot, with a covered lid, placed near poor Jacko. Ever inquisitive, he instantly flies to scrutinise the contents of the vessel; but the moment he slowly and cautiously raises the lid, and the serpent's head becomes visible, it is ludicrous to watch the mixture of dread and prudence which agitates him. With a quick motion,

he shuts down the lid, screams, and makes the most hideous grimaces, dances round the pot, and presently returns to it, touches the lid, but too wise to lift it, makes a sudden exit from the scene.

But now I come upon that point in my sketch which bears upon my promised anecdote. The moonshee did not accompany me, as I set out one bright morning to ramble about my favourite rocks, where I found ample store of wild plants and flowers, whose names and qualities I better know now than I did then. Amongst the most striking of these may be mentioned the beautiful bael-tree (*Ægle marmelos*), which bears a hard rinded, apple-shaped fruit, of aromatic smell, and covered with a slimy exudation. It has recently been introduced into medical practice in England, as an astringent of efficacy in diarrhœa. Up and round this fine tree clambered a magnificent parasite, the *Cæsalpinia paniculata*, festooning the glittering leaves of its supporter with dark glossy foliage and gorgeous racemes of orange blossoms. A shrub, which seemed to be a favourite food of the monkey, yet which belongs to the delcterious oleander tribe, had a peculiarly striking appearance, from bearing at the same time a profusion of snowy blossoms and a grotesque fruit, not unlike twin-pods of a bean, their narrow extremities united together. The whole plant is full of a slimy milk; and if, as I conclude, it be the *Nerium tinctorum* of Roxburgh, and of the order *Apocyneæ*, it possesses very powerful qualities as a medicine and as a dye. The *Datura*, too, abounded, scenting the air with an oppressive odour, too luscious for enjoyment. The seeds are

frequently conveyed into the potions prepared by the Thug and the Dacoit to stupify their intended victim. But a long article might be made about these Oriental plants, whilst I must proceed with my story.

I was climbing one of the slanting ascents of the Runmundle cliff, when I became aware that an unusual commotion reigned amongst my friends the monkeys, which had by this time got so familiarised with my appearance, that they seldom condescended to honour me with a snarl, or a bough flung towards me in sport. I was conscious that something went wrong with them; and as I knew that sentiments of superstition, if not of humanity, preserved them from the persecutions of the natives, I became curious as to the cause of the prevalent excitement. Creeping round a rock, behind which they appeared to congregate, and on which grew a large gum-arabic tree, completely golden with the abundance of yellow blossoms which covered it, and which, like Tennyson's lime-tree, was in sooth

A summer-home of murmurous wings—

I at once found myself on the stage of a strange tragedy in simian life. In the voluminous folds of an enormous boa constrictor was being slowly enwrapped a beautiful brown monkey, whose last cries and struggles denoted that I came too late, even had I been prepared to do battle with the reptile in the cause of oppressed innocence. The monkeys, in evident alarm, ran hither and thither, moping and

mowing, and chattering; but not one advanced near the spot, where presently their poor companion became almost quite hidden from view in the embraces of its destroyer. Determined to watch the process of the affair, I quietly sat down, until gradually the monkey had been moulded, as it were, into a proper condition for deglutition, for I could hear the bones crack as they broke beneath the pressure to which they were subjected; and erelong, as the serpent began to untwist its folds, I could admire at leisure the magnificence of its glittering scales, that shone like some richly variegated metallic substance. I shuddered as I beheld its grand and fearful head—the prominent orbits of the eyes—and the eyes themselves large, and luminous with a fiery light. The creature was at least twenty feet in length, and was apparently famished by a long fast. Perfectly heedless of the noise made by the monkeys, it unwound its coils till the victim, now an unrecognisable mass, lay before it lubricated and fit to be received into the destroyer's stomach.

When the reptile had fairly commenced its repast, and the before flaccid body began to fill and swell, I retired from the arena of conflict and hall of banquet, desirous of summoning my friend Noor-ood-Deen to assist me in capturing the sated giant. I knew that when gorged to repletion, there would be no difficulty in making a prize of the serpent; and the moonshee entered into my plans right willingly. Accompanied by a stout lascar, bearing a strong cudgel and a sharp knife, for slaughter and skinning, we lost little time

in reaching the scene, where, however, fresh marvels were being enacted, proving that the passion of revenge is not confined to the human breast. Keeping aloof, we resolved not to mar by any interference the by no means mystifying operations in which the monkeys were engaged.

The boa constrictor lay, thoroughly gorged, and like a log of wood, beneath the same projecting mass of cliff where I had left it. On the summit of this rock a troop of monkeys had assembled, and three or four of the largest and strongest were occupied in displacing an immense fragment of the massive stone, already loosened by time and the elements, from the rest of the ledge. This mass almost overshadowed the reptile. By enormous exertions, made in a silence that was rare with them, they at last succeeded in pushing it onwards until it hung over the boa's head, when uttering a fierce yell, in which every separate voice mingled until it took a diapason of undescribable discord, by a vigorous movement they shoved it sheer down. The heavy mass fell right on the serpent's head, crushing it as if it were a cocoa-nut; and as the reptile lashed its fearful tail about in the final struggles of life, we could not refrain from joining in the singular chorus of rejoicing with which the monkeys now celebrated their accomplished vengeance. Truly, from the feats of the malicious baboon that gloried in the name of Major Weir, to the amiable creature of which Philip Quarles tells, I can remember of no recorded facts that surpass this evidence in favour of monkey-memory and monkey-

wisdom, and I vouch for its truth as far as it goes, knowing well that my friend Noor-ood-Deen, still flourishing in the Black Town of Madras, will add his testimony to any applicant for confirmation of the anecdote.

AZETH.

Suggested by Miss Lynn's magnificent Romance of "Azeth the Egyptian."

The Boy is beautiful as youth can be
When youth is sanctified by holy airs
That breathe not of the sick world's perfidy,
Is beautiful as Nature, when she bears
Love's impress on her bosom. Earth
To him is ripe with worth,
And yet within his heart there is a dearth!
He loveth all! and all things that be fair
Are dearer for their fairness—for his path
Hath never yet been crossed
By any spirit of wrath,
Or incarnation of the Demon, tossed
Into some shape of ugliness; nor e'en
Hath sorrow stung him into sighs! What, then,
Panteth that heart of sixteen summers for?
Gazeth that mild dark eye in search of? Stretcheth
That warm and generous hand to soothe and press?
Those lips, still longing in sleep's tenderness
Something more dear than bird or flower,
Or pet gazelle in silvan bower,
To dwell on and caress?
As doth the bee
The thyme-bank in the glen,
The bird its nestling-tree,
The flowing wave its shore!

He loves the Beautiful, he loves the True!
He loves the sunshine, and its skies of blue;

Warmth, and green shade, and perfume, and sweet sounds;
But (for he knows there is a God on high,
A Father and a Friend) his inner eye
Looketh at forms whose fairness leaps the bounds
Of limiting outer sight; and one of these
He makes his Spirit-love—so wooing her
As one may woo his star of destinies,
With an idolatry that keeps astir
With fever his new blood:
Fit time for prowling Passion to intrude,
And scatter aspics where young doves did brood!

The Tempter came!—like truth he spake—like worth
And wisdom preached, or reasoned. Beauty, too,
Clothed the foul spirit in fair form of flesh:
And subtle falsehood—softly chanted forth—
Seemed just the longed-for learning that should strew
The Boy's track with knowledge. In the mesh
Of sophistry his bird-like Spirit daily
Entangleth itself; nor longer gaily
The lark sings in his ears, the flowers bloom nigh!
Doubts and dark fears—like caustic drops that fall
Slowly, but surely, from some poisonous wall
To taint a rose beneath it—dangerously
Thicken within his mind. The God of love
Behind yon sun becomes—he knows not what!
A shade—a bigot's dream—an aimless nought!

And love itself a passion, borne above
On sensual wings, that flap like vultures o'er
Things that were hated, if but known before!
And he hath turned Voluptuary in *thought*—
(Thank God, not yet in *act!*) but he is out
Of his fair sphere of purity, afloat
In passion's bark upon a sea of Doubt!

He learns that there is sin, our Beautiful!
Sad learning and worse lesson! He no more
Sees beauty all around. On sea or shore
A mist pervadeth that makes all things dull

That once were bright. The spotted snake
Looks not so harmless in the brake—
Still it is fair, but it *may* bite
And slay! The scarlet berry take
From yonder bush, but dread to slake
Thy thirst—dash, dash it far from sight,
For it *may* poison! and yon apple, lo!
How soon to ashes on thy lips 'twill grow!

But suns, that ripen richness, rot rank growth,
And Falsehood hath no force to cope with Truth!
The East wind blows not ever—from the South
Time brings forth zephyrs fraught with health and ruth!
So came REACTION! so Vice wore its own
Foul livery of sin, abhorred when known!
Virtue within the Boy was not extinct,
Though quelled by evil influence: Beauty, still,
Could charm as much as ever; and unlinked
With physical defect, Love's holy thrill
Pervades his heart! the beautiful, the pure,
Arouse emotions which—bestowed to bless—
The world's ungenial nature renders donors
Of falsest cruelty for tenderness,
And selfishness, whose fondest kiss dishonours!

But Love—how blest a thing 'twixt hearts both pure,
As his—our Azeth's—and that Spiritual One
Who hath his highest worship!—Death, be sure,
Makes sweeter bridal-beds than ever sun
Of Earth looks down upon! and so, when She
Flitted from life away—(an exhalation
Of grace and virtue) up into the skies—
He, too, beholding where the vision flies,
And kneeling in a silent adoration,
Gave up his soul to Death!—too pure to sate
Earth's thirsts from earthly wells! too passionate
To live unloved, unloving! Lo! he goeth
Where Holy Love all sum of loving knoweth!

THE APOSTLE AND THE CHERRIES.

Suggested by a passage in Miss Martineau's "Letters from the Holy Land."

'Twas Summer 'midst the plains of Jericho,
A morn of Summer, when our Saviour took
His way from proud Jerusalem with some
Of his disciples. From the upland range
That looked on Jordan, in the early light
The distant hills of Moab soared aloft,
Scanning a fertile tract, while southward stretched
Its motionless expanse the dark Dead Sea.

'Twas Summer 'midst the Palms, whose genial shade
Lay yet remote before them—and as Time
Wore on, and higher climb the sun,
The far-off Palm trees' shadows would have been
A welcome shelter. But, in sweet discourse,
The Teacher and His followers passed along,
The ardent Peter ever at His side.
"Lo! what lieth there?"
Jesus exclaimed; and Peter, looking down,
Beheld a Horse-shoe.—"Take it up my friend—
It yet may profit thee,"—the Teacher cried.
But Peter, with a look that little said
For such old lumber, passed it scornfully;
Nor yet perceived how—stooping down—Our Lord
Picked up the unregarded thing.
Ere long
A village at the ridge's base they reached;
And there—unnoticed still—Christ did exchange
The Horse-shoe for a measure of ripe fruit—
Juicy and mellow Cherries! High and higher
Now mounted the hot sun, and higher they
Mounted the ridge that looked on Jordan: bare
And flinty, rugged to the feet, and hard
To climb, that ridge! and from the heated rocks
A stifling breath tormented passers-by.

Peter, sore-tortured with the heat and dust,
Now lags the last of all; and fainting thinks
Of the Palms' shadow and the distant Well.
Lo! what is in his path?—a gem?—a stone
Of luminous worth?—Nay, better still, a *Cherry!*
He stoopeth quick, and quickly to his lips
Putteth the grateful fruit that cools his mouth:
And lo! another, and another—each
Dropped by Our Saviour, who, well pleased, beholds
The eagerness with which the Apostle stoops
At every step to take the cool refreshment!
So, at length,
When all the Cherries had been duly dropt,
All gathered, and sweet Jesus paused awhile—
Up came refreshed His followers. With a smile
The Teacher looking gently in his face,
Said—"Peter! from the scorned Horse-shoe sprang
These cherries!—think'st thou not, my friend,
That he who scorns to stoop for what is small,
May chance ere long to bend his stubborn back
For even smaller things?"

THE END.

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